

MONDAY 20P

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MONDAY 20P

Stronger voice in Cabinet promised after 250,000 protesters take their case to the capital

Labour bows to country people power

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR AND MICHAEL HORNSEY

RURAL communities were promised a stronger voice in the Cabinet and handed other concessions last night as the Government bowed to a mass show of "people power" with a march by more than 250,000 through central London.

As the countryside visited the capital in the biggest political demonstration in Britain for well over a decade, ministers pledged to "listen and learn" about concerns that the rural way of life is under threat.

There was even talk of "conciliation" on fox hunting, the main focus of the protest. Police said the demonstration passed off peacefully with only a handful of arrests. The carnival atmosphere was marred only by occasional exchanges of verbal abuse between marchers and pockets of anti-hunt protesters.

The organisers, the Countryside Alliance, put the number of those taking part at 284,500. "We had people stationed at different points along the route, counting each line of marchers as they passed", a spokesman said. The police estimate was 250,000.

The march got underway at about 10.30am from Victoria Embankment. People were still leaving the starting point at 3.20pm, and the last marchers reached the end of the route beside the Serpentine in Hyde Park, towards 5pm. Whistles, bugles, horns and bagpipes blared out from the massed ranks and some aircraft flew overhead.

London Underground struggled to cope with three to four times more travellers than during rush hour. Some stations were forced to close briefly, despite running trains very 50 seconds. More than 2,000 coaches and nearly 30 special trains were hired to carry the protesters to the capital.

The turnout clearly impressed Michael Meacher, the Environment Minister, the sole representative of the Government on the march. Using language which contrasted



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sharply with that of some of his front and backbench colleagues, he gave a series of enlivened interviews which suggested the Government had been taken aback by the scale of anger in the shires.

It amounted to a radical shift in the Government's approach to rural issues after continuing disarray and was clearly ordered by the Prime Minister, whose aides made it clear that Mr Meacher was at the march to speak for the Government and underline its support for the countryside.

As recently as yesterday some ministers had attacked the march's organisers and claimed that it was being hijacked by vested interests and the Tory party. But Mr Meacher described it as a "celebration of the countryside" and welcomed the fact that so many had "taken the time, the trouble, the effort and the money to come to London."

Then, in a meeting with marchers on the Jonathan Dimbleby programme on LWT, he offered more olive branches.

On hunting, he became the first senior minister to accept that Michael Foster's Bill, which has stirred fury in some rural areas, would not reach the statute book.

He refused to commit the Government to bringing in its own measure if backbench

attempts failed. Instead he called for more discussion between the two sides of the argument "because I think there are certainly things on each side where I think we can reach some conciliation. If you were to ban fox hunting you have still got to cull foxes. They do a fearful lot of damage to livestock. So it is a genuine conservation issue in the countryside. I accept that."

He confirmed that the Government was considering a greenfield tax on development land in the countryside. "The key point is that we want to provide a deterrent to building in the countryside and we want to provide an incentive to build to decent standards in towns."

He also said that reducing VAT on redeveloping derelict land and buildings "does make sense", although the Government would have to look at priorities. He underlined the Government's desire for a voluntary agreement rather than a statutory one on allowing people freedom to roam on moorlands and uplands. Mr Meacher also confirmed growing speculation that Mr Blair was close to a decision to set up a new department of rural affairs to represent the countryside in Cabinet and to replace the existing ministry of agriculture.

John Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister, appears to have won his battle to take from the Department of the Environment key countryside interests such as the Countryside Commission and the Rural Development Commission.

The moves followed other recent concessions. On Saturday Stephen Byers, the education standards minister, promised action to end the stream of village school closures. Also, under a plan being considered for the forthcoming transport White Paper, areas are to be designated "zones of tranquillity" in which cars must automatically defer to walkers.



Demonstrators on the Embankment yesterday at the start of the 2½-mile march

Squires and grooms join in the ranks

By ALAN HAMILTON

IF Wat Tyler could have summoned so many countrymen to London in 1381, the Peasants' Revolt would have been a pushover.

Wat was protesting at an early poll tax. But yesterday's demonstration in the capital was more than twice the size even of the protest against the Thatcher Poll Tax in 1990. The Countryside March, however, was peaceful, good-natured, and there were no speeches.

Few of us can visualise what a quarter of a million people all together look like. But walking at least ten abreast, it took the dense march at least four and a half hours to pass any given point on its two-and-a-half-mile route from the Embankment to Hyde Park.

They had the place to themselves. Londoners had mysteriously evaporated like Muscovites before Napoleon — possibly for a day out in the country. There were few bystanders beyond knots of bemused French and German tourists, in whose own countries such a demonstration would be quite unnecessary, and groups of supporters cheering the marchers on from upstairs windows of the gentlemen's clubs of Pall Mall and Piccadilly.

As it flowed along the Embankment, around Trafalgar Square and through St James's, the endless column was a broad, sluggish Mississippi of muted green and brown tweeds, worn by squires and grooms alike. There was little evidence of the Home Counties posing kit of green wellies and shiny new Barbour jackets which townies affect north of Potter's Bar. The very occasional black labrador looked as though it worked for its living.

At the start of the march, vendors did a brisk trade in

official "I was there" badges at £3, and rather less business in tin whistles at £1. Plenty of demonstrators had their own hunting horns, which they blew as they passed under the Embankment bridges for maximum sound effect.

Each marcher was handed a registration form to be filled in and sent by the truckload to Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, a brown envelope in which to place a donation to help to cover the £500,000 cost of the march, and a letter requesting "no litter and no violence: we are the largest and most law-abiding minority in the country".

Pro-hunting activists formed the majority of the march, at least judging by the

'Londoners had evaporated like Muscovites before Napoleon — possibly for a day in the country'

overwhelming number of their placards and banners bearing such agricultural agri-prop "Foster's great drink, rotten Bill" — a reference to Michael Foster MP, who introduced the anti-hunting Bill in the Commons.

But other concerns were voiced in the slogans of a demonstration which was supposed to be about wider countryside concerns. A lone marcher sported the placard: "Stop Stevenage spreading" — a reference to a controversial plan to build on green belt land in Hertfordshire, while farmers wore T-shirts proclaiming: "My beef is traceable. Is your supermarket's?"

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Interest rates split

The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee meets this week ahead of the March 17 Budget and is likely to be split over the need for higher interest rates. Page 48

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Prescott to order lower rail fares

By ARTHUR LEATLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

JOHN PRESCOTT is to order lower train and bus fares for millions of passengers in a huge shake-up of public transport charges.

Rail and bus companies will be told to introduce a much wider range of discount fares as part of the Government's drive to double the number of passengers over the next decade. Mr Prescott will demand many more special offers for the elderly, unemployed, disabled and children as part of a campaign to target potential passengers to fill off-peak trains which often run almost empty.

The Deputy Prime Minister is drawing up plans to bring better co-ordination of discount offers across the country as part of his campaign to persuade motorists to switch to public transport.

Mr Prescott will tell the 25 train operators and many bus companies to devise plans each year to attract new customers at rock-bottom prices. Developing off-peak services is seen as the key to increased use of railways, which are already facing peak-time overcrowding.

Rail firms will be expected to draw up plans, to be ap-

proved by John O'Brien, the rail franchising director, that will set out over the course of a year the special offers available to passengers. Better promotion of day tripper offers, deals for early commuters and special family fares will be at the centre of plans intended to help to reduce congestion on the roads.

At present, operators do not need to consult Mr O'Brien and ministers believe that offers have become too fragmented, with insufficient co-ordination across the network. Mr O'Brien has been ordered by the Government to make increases in the number of passenger one of his three top priorities and he will be told to put pressure on operators which do not draw up adequate lists.

Rail companies have increased the number of passengers by 7 per cent, to almost a billion a year, but there are fears that much of the rise is related to economic prosperity and is restricted to commuter traffic. Mr Prescott is understood to believe that the long-term future of buses and the railways depends on much greater leisure travel by public transport.

'Father Ted' dies from heart attack

Desmet Morgan, the Irishman who played Father Ted Crilly in the hit Channel 4 comedy series, has died days before his 46th birthday.

He collapsed while entertaining friends at a dinner party at home in Richmond, South-East London. It is believed he suffered a heart attack. He had finished filming the third series the day before. Pages 3, 23

Kosovo clashes leave 20 dead

The Albanian-dominated Serbian province of Kosovo exploded into violence with reports of up to 20 deaths in clashes between separatist paramilitaries and Serb police and army units. Diplomats fear that a long-threatened backlash by President Milosevic may have begun. Page 13

Ramprakash to the rescue

Mark Ramprakash scored 65, only the third half-century of his Test career, and averted the England follow-on in the fourth Test against West Indies in Georgetown, Guyana. Looking uncharacteristically at ease, he battled for 220 minutes. Page 25

A spoonful of sugar 'helps healthy diet'

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A spoonful of sugar not only helps the medicine go down, but is very good for you on its own, according to an expert international committee.

Far from being the deadly dietary ingredient of the past, it does not cause cancer, heart disease, diabetes or obesity. The claim that eating sugar makes children hyperactive is also groundless.

Even on tooth decay, still blamed on sweets by most dentists, the report says that tooth-brushing and fluoride are more important than cutting sugar consumption.

The committee was assembled by the World Health Organisation and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. Its report recommends a moderate amount of sugar as part of a healthy diet, and does not even make the distinction between natural sugar in fruits and refined sugar in bowls. Wherever it comes from, the report says, sugar is good because it gives quick energy and stops people eating too much other food. "A high carbohydrate diet that includes moderate amounts of sugar plus regular physical activity is the optimal pro-

gramme to avoid over-consumption of energy and its resultant obesity."

The conclusions will come as a shock to those who are convinced that sugar is *Pure, White and Deadly* — the title of an influential book published in the 1970s by the late John Yudkin, then Professor of Nutrition at London University. Yudkin claimed that eating sugar was the cause of heart disease, diabetes and breast cancer. Sugar has since been accused of providing "empty calories" — energy without true nutritional value.

More recently, the Government's leading nutritional advisory committee drew a distinction between white sugars and those that occur naturally. The sugar industry and many nutritionists have long claimed that this distinction is meaningless, and this view is backed by the UN committee.

The report is the first from the UN bodies for 20 years and is due to be published within the next few weeks. It covers all carbohydrates and especially commends those in cereals, vegetables, legumes and fruits.



PEOPLE LIFE NEWS

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COUNTRYSIDE MARCH



Some of the demonstrators crossing Waterloo Bridge yesterday. Many Tory MPs also came, in their waxed jackets, moleskin trousers and flat caps, they looked much like any other marcher. William Hague was cheered as he walked

Unlikely duo hatched the idea over dinner

By MICHAEL HORNSBY
COUNTRYSIDE
CORRESPONDENT

THE tens of thousands of people marching through Central London in defence of rural life yesterday represented a public relations triumph for two men who on the face of it make unlikely bedfellows.

One is Robin Hanbury-Tenison, an explorer and campaigner for preservation of rain forests, who farms 2,000 acres on Bodmin Moor. The other is Chicago-born Eric Bettelheim, a wealthy barrister who works for an American law firm in London and lives in Knightsbridge.

Mr Hanbury-Tenison, 61, an Old Etonian and chief executive of the Countryside Alliance, the body that

THE ORGANISERS

organised the march, is the official face of the rural revolt. But Mr Bettelheim is credited with supplying much of the ideological drive and marketing expertise.

It was over dinner that Mr Bettelheim came up with the idea that culminated in last July's countryside rally in Hyde Park, attended by 100,000 people. This was the precursor to yesterday's march.

"I reminded Robin of the Jarrow hunger marches by unemployed workers in the 1930s, and suggested that we should get country people walking to London from all over the country to show how they feel," Mr Bettelheim said. He is the son of Bruno Bettelheim, the celebrated

THE COUNTRYSIDE AGENDA

HUNTING
Demand: catalyst for march is opposition to Private Member's Bill by Michael Foster, Labour MP for Worcester, to ban all hunting with hounds this year.
Response: Government officially neutral but most ministers and MPs favour a ban. Bill likely to fail for lack of time but ministers have signalled a hunting ban could be passed by 2002.

RIGHT TO FARM
Demand: no compulsory right to roam over private land other than on recognised public rights of way. Willingness to negotiate wider public access schemes, managed by landowners.
Response: Government conceded last week that it was prepared to give voluntary approach a chance. Threat of legislation remains if landowners do not open up most uncultivated land.

HOUSING
Demand: Countryside Alliance wants three quarters or more of the 4.4 million new houses planned between now and 2016 to be built on recycled "brownfield" (in urban) sites.
Response: Government last week raised target for the proportion of new homes on urban sites from 50 per cent to 60 per cent.

FARMING
Demand: CA wants more help for farmers, whose incomes fell by more than 40 per cent last year, mainly due to BSE crisis and strong pound. Also wants less "heavy state" regulation, such as beef-on-bone ban and threat to outlaw raw milk.
Response: extra £285 million aid package for farmers announced last December. In 14-15m last week Government said it would pay the £70 million cost of starting a computerised cattle-tracing system and introducing new abattoir controls.

AGRICULTURE
Demand: CA wants action to halt demise of rural businesses, shops, pubs, schools and bus services, partly with aid of subsidies and more flexibility in the business rating system.
Response: much rhetoric about regeneration of village life but little action. On eve of march, Stephen Byers, Education Minister, promised to stop the closure of schools. Government says most rural problems created by Tories.

ENVIRONMENT
Demand: Country Landowners Association leads calls for new Rural Affairs Ministry, integrating farming and environmental management.
Response: such a ministry under discussion. Green pressure groups are worried that Ministry of Agriculture could end up taking control of countryside management from Department of Environment, giving farm lobby too much power.

methods than any fox." The Countryside Alliance is an amalgam, formed a year ago from the British Field Sports Society (BFSS), founded in 1930, and two more recent bodies, the Countryside Business Group (CBG), Mr Bettelheim's brainchild, and the Countryside Movement, briefly chaired by Lord Steel of Aikwood, the former Liberal leader.

The idea behind the CBG was to persuade country businesses to contribute a proportion of their turnover to the countryside campaign, which had been galvanised by the prospect of a Labour Government sympathetic to a ban on hunting.

By early last year it had become clear that the three bodies could work more effectively by pooling their resources.

Members of the alliance's board include the Duke of Westminster, who gave about £1 million to set up the Countryside Movement, Hugh van Cutsem, a Norfolk landowner and shooting companion of the Prince of Wales, and Earl Peel, chairman of the Game Conservancy.

Grassroots support comes from the 80,000 subscription-paying members of the BFSS (the standard fee is £30 a head) and 350,000 people in affiliated field sports clubs. Total income from subscriptions and donations is put at about £5 million a year.

The alliance estimates the cost of the march at £400,000 to £500,000 which it says is being met mainly by thousands of small donations.

Leading article, page 21

Tory MPs discover the public joy of mass protest

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

THEY may have been politicians for most of their lives, but until yesterday many had never marched in protest.

Tory MPs and peers broke the habit of a lifetime and turned out in force at the countryside demonstration in London. The MPs — swiftly dubbed "demo-virgins" — discovered the joys of mass movement politics.

William Hague, who to many Tories is an expert on these matters after spending a morning at the Notting Hill Carnival, was cheered as he walked.

"It is unusual for a Tory politician first to go out on a march, and second to get such a warm reception," one aide noted wryly. Like Mr Hague, most of the Shadow Cabinet and many Tory backbenchers marched separately, and largely anonymously, with their families and constituents. Having shed their urban uniform of pinstripe suit and brogues, they looked much like any other marcher in waxed jackets, moleskin trousers and flat caps.

Michael Howard, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, said the rally sent a very important message to the Government. But had he been on a demonstration before? "I don't think so," he said. "Not in my time," confirmed his wife, Sandra.

Oliver Letwin, Tory MP for Dorset West, said: "This is the first time I have been on a demonstration. I hope it is the last."

Tom King, the former Defence Secretary, also said he had not been on a march before. Edward Leigh, Tory MP for Gainsborough, said he might have been on a march as a student but could not remember. "I might have been taken on an anti-nuclear march at Aldermaston when I was a baby," he added.

Lord Strathclyde, the Tory Chief Whip in the Lords, was there with his wife and two

young children. "It is their first demo too," he said. Other peers spotted included Lord Moyihan, the former sports minister, and Lord Burnham, the Deputy Chief Whip in the Lords. Nicholas Soames, a tie decorated with cows, and a bright blue hanky sticking out of his breast pocket, said it was "a wonderful and very moving occasion". John Stevens, one of 18 Tory MEPs at the march, said there was an important European angle to the march. "Any ban on hunting could be fought in the European Court," he said. "It

THE POLITICIANS

could provide better protection than Parliament."

Apart from Lord Donoghue, the Agriculture Minister, and Michael Meacher, the Environment Minister, Labour was represented by Frank Cook, MP for Stockton North; Hilton Dawson, MP for Lancaster and Wyre; Lord Stoddart of Swinton, a former Labour Whip, and Kate Hoey, MP for Vauxhall, Ms Hoey, a long-standing opponent of a hunting ban, said: "It wouldn't surprise me if many of the Tories had not been on one before. It was probably very good for them. But they were just like many of the marchers who had never protested before."

The Liberal Democrats were represented by Paddy Ashdown, Lord Steel of Aikwood, and Charles Kennedy, the party's rural affairs spokesman. Among the celebrities marching were John McCrick, the racing commentator, Clarysa Dickson Wright, one half of the BBC's *Two Fat Ladies*, the actors Anthony Andrews and Edward Fox, the authors John Mortimer and Frederick Forsyth, and Lucinda Green, the Olympic three-day eventer.



A marcher lunches in Hyde Park after the march

Twedy crocodile cowers the lions

Continued from page 1

An innate belief in the superiority of their meat failed to prevent many marchers from doing business with a kerbside vendor of hamburgers whose provenance must have been, at the very best, dubious.

The marchers' route steered them well away from such contentious sites as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Home Office. Instead, passing through Trafal-

gar Square, they were greatly cheered to see that some of their number had climbed aboard the bronze lions at the base of Nelson's Column and were waving their banners to great advantage.

As the twedy crocodile approached the end of its march at the gates of Hyde Park, it came across a small but noisy demonstration of half a dozen anti-hunting campaigners who, undeterred by

being outnumbered by approximately 40,000 to one, engaged in a trade of insults.

All afternoon the marchers poured into the park, an ideal location for sitting on the grass among the crocuses, getting out the Thermos and Tupperware and attacking the doorstep sandwiches. The demonstration's leaders had, of course, eaten breakfast at the Savoy.

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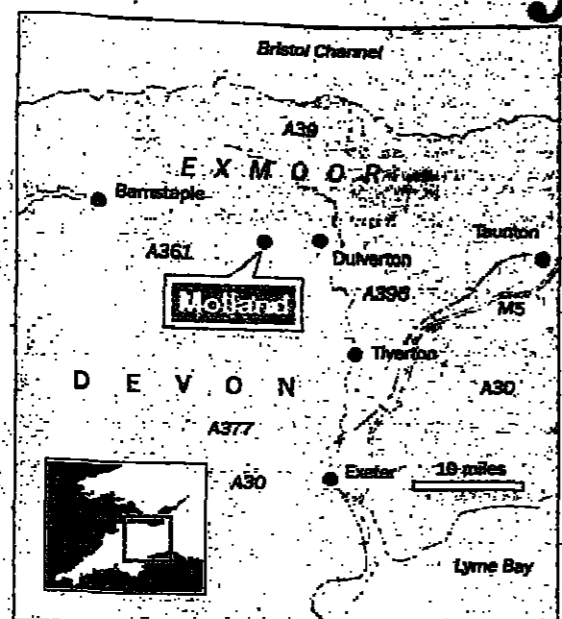
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The day the villages went to town



Simon de Bruxelles joins the folk from Molland in Devon on their coach to the capital and hears their reasons for joining the march

IT IS 4.30 in the morning and the village of Molland, on the southern fringe of Exmoor, is "as black as a badger's tit". That is how Howard Reeves describes it and that is the way he wants it to stay. There is no light pollution here to guide me as I make my way to the rendezvous in the car park of the Black Cock Inn.

Like most of Molland I am on my way to London for the Countryside March, although I am the only one to stumble into the cattle grid.

Molland, in Devon, is home to one of Britain's finest shoots, where captains of industry and wealthy foreign visitors pay large amounts of money to blast pheasants out of the sky. If hunting with hounds is banned, Molland knows that it is likely to be next in the firing line.

The coach to London has been organised with military precision by Paul Beazley, a head keeper who lost an eye to a landmine in what was then Rhodesia. He did not need to use persuasion or coercion to sell every one of the 49 seats at £10 a head. "Directly or indirectly, most of the people who live here owe their living to hunting, fishing or shooting,"

he said.

Everyone is on time, if barely eyed after an evening in the village hall where they square-danced until midnight to the sound of a fiddle, accordion and concertina beneath an ancient stag's head and a photograph of the Molland home guard. Remarkably little has changed since the local heroes lined up to have their picture taken in 1940. The village is owned by the Molland estate and its few hundred residents are all tenants. There has been no influx of wealthy urban weekenders, as in other Exmoor villages, and it is not threatened with development.

But as far as Howard Reeves is concerned, the late 20th century has come quite close enough already. Mr Reeves, 53, a former policeman who runs a small shoot near by, dislikes foxes, badgers, black people and homosexuals. But more than any of these, he hates Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister.

Mr Reeves produces from his pocket a wire snare used for catching foxes. "Everything is now so sanitised, prepackaged, ready for the



Taking a break in unfamiliar territory, a well-prepared couple stock up for the rigours ahead — the march by thousands of country dwellers through the streets of London

oven, no shit, no dirt, no feathers, no skin," he says, eyes glistening. "It's all wrapped in cellophane in the supermarket ready for the housewife who doesn't want to get her hands dirty."

"Pluck a pheasant, pluck a rabbit, grollick a deer, it's anathema to 80 per cent of the population, yet man was born to hunt. We have people who come to shoot with us who've

never, ever seen darkness before. They have to buy Wellington boots when they get here because they don't realise that there is mud in the country."

"Most people don't understand that what will happen to foxes if they ban hunting is more snoring and more shooting, which will be far, far crueler."

As the bus passes Heathrow, a tatty banner saying "No hunting" hangs from a motorway bridge. Mr Reeves roars: "We're entering enemy territory."

London is not as hostile as he fears, but it has its share of pitfalls. When Mr Reeves tries to light his pipe on the Underground a London Transport official pounces faster than a lurcher on a hare.

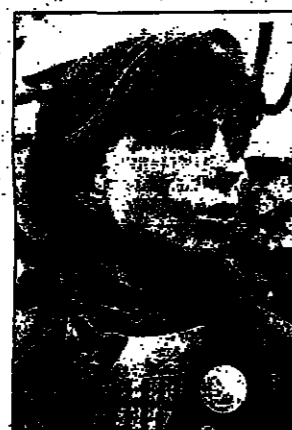
Kate Stevens, a farmer, is less strident than Mr Reeves, but is adamant she wants her year-old daughter to grow up looking forward to more than just a place in one of Molland's three skittles teams. "I'd like her to ride and hunt," she said, "but I wonder whether she will be allowed to. I don't really see why people want to interfere in something that has worked well for centuries."

As many as are on the trip have stayed behind to look after the farms. Tony, Ms Stevens's farmhand, went to the rally held in London last July, the first time in his 50 years he had ventured further than Bristol.

As Molland makes its way to join the march to Hyde Park Corner, there is not a Barbour in sight. They are friendly, funny but determined to make the Government listen to their concerns. Squeezed into the Tube, cheek by jowl with fellow countrymen, they realise how lucky they are to be neither city dwellers nor hairy chickens.

Mr Beazley's only disappointment was the march organisers' ban on uniforms, as he had hoped to wear his heavy tweed keepers' kit.

THE MAIN CHARACTERS



Stevens



Reeves



Beazley

THE concerns of those who live in rural areas are varied. Five of those who were closely involved with the Molland march spoke passionately yesterday of their hopes and fears for the countryside.

Paul Beazley, 48, is the head keeper at the Molland shoot, which is owned by the James's gunsmiths, Holland & Holland. He believes that the countryside's only hope is tolerance, from both sides.

Last month he raised £6,000 for the Devon Air Ambulance with a one-day charity shoot. "We've got to let people know what we are about," he said. "I've no problem with the minority who have a genuine moral objection, but most of the antis really know absolutely

nothing about the sport they are trying to ban." Kate Stevens, tenant farmer with 850 acres, a large part of it moorland, supports a right to roam but would prefer it to be a voluntary. She said: "People should be allowed to enjoy the countryside but they must behave responsibly and follow the country code."

Howard Reeves, 53, former policeman and water bailiff, resents being told he cannot kill the badgers or birds of prey that attack his game birds. "I think I am going to have to move to Scotland because it is the last real wilderness left," he said. John Howarth, 53, a lorry driver, moved to Molland from Lancashire a year ago. He is a "shooting man" who pays £500 a year to be part of

a 12-gun syndicate that rents its own shoot.

He said: "We get ten days' shooting a season. It's my money and I should be allowed to spend it how I like. I enjoy training gun dogs and I get a lot of satisfaction from it. Once they've got rid of fox hunting they are not going to stop there because they've got the blood lust."

David Filmer, 44, honorary Mollandian, who is married to a local woman, lives in a council "box" in Horsham, West Sussex. "The farm labourers' cottages I grew up in Kent now sell for £150,000 to people who commute to London everyday," he said. "Real country people like me can't afford to live there anymore."

Normal service maintained

LISTENERS to March FM, the one-off radio station set up for yesterday's Countryside March, had their suspicions of town folk confirmed when hunt saboteurs jammed the station's signal with rave music.

March FM, broadcasting for yesterday only at 87.7FM, had promised a benign programme of march information, discussions with prominent countryside supporters such as Jack Charlton, the angler and ex-footballer, Major Dick Hern, the Queen's former equestrian trainer, and key figures from the Young Farmers. These would be interrupted by uplifting blasts of *Jersildon*, *Danny Boy* and *Flower of Scotland*. Instead,

Radio March FM was little troubled by saboteurs' attempts at jamming, reports Philip Delves Broughton

listeners were greeted by hard-core rave music.

All had been going well through the morning, kicking off with shows presented by John McCrick, the racing pundit, followed by Anthony Andrews, the actor best known for playing Sebastian Flyte in the television adaptation of *Brideshead Revisited*, and Christopher Biggins, the pantomime dame and paragon. About 50,000 bright yellow March FM receivers

were sold to marchers at £2.50 a piece. There was a passionate defence of hunting from a shop-floor worker at the Rover plant in Cowley, and visits from the England shooting team.

At around mid-day, however, soon after *Land of My Fathers*, the signal began to crack up and a distinctly non-U voice came through saying: "pss off our land. Now." The marchers, continued the voice, were now listening to the

Hunt Saboteurs' Broadcasting Corporation "broadcasting to the nation's bigots wherever they are". From the March FM stand in Hyde Park, march organisers were sent out along the route to evaluate the saboteurs' reach. Not so bad, it turned out.

Only in certain patches, particularly down by the start of the march beside the Thames and in Victoria, could listeners hear the saboteurs' "Great hunting debate: Shall we hang them or shall we shoot them?"

By mid-afternoon, the station had managed to reduce the jamming to the distant murmur of rave music, still an unusual background to their William Hague interview.

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Patten editor may go to new firm with book

Rival has offered role to executive who resigned in row over China criticism as publishers hold off revolt, writes Raymond Snoddy

STUART PROFFITT, the senior book editor who resigned from HarperCollins, the publishers, last week is going to be offered the chance to edit Chris Patten's book, *East and West*, after all.

The book will be published on September 23 by Macmillan after Rupert Murdoch, chairman and chief executive of The News Corporation, made clear his dislike of the book and HarperCollins, like *The Times* part of News Corp, dropped plans to publish it. The company is now fighting a rearguard action to stop a threatened revolt by some of its authors over its treatment of Mr Proffitt.

Richard Charkin, chief executive of Macmillan, said yesterday he planned to offer Mr Proffitt the chance to complete



Heffer: returned his advance with interest not worth the £125,000 advance.

Mr Proffitt, who had earlier praised the book as "probably the most lucid, best written and compelling book I have read by a politician since I came into publishing" declined and last week finally left the company.

This week HarperCollins will have to fight to limit any possible authors' revolt

over the cancellation of the Patten book and the treatment of Mr Proffitt. Only one author, the political writer and journalist Simon Heffer, has actually left.

Mr Heffer, who is writing the biography of the late Enoch Powell said yesterday he had written to Eddie Bell, the executive chairman of HarperCollins, saying he did not want the company to publish his book because of the "massive impropriety" that had occurred and returned the advance with interest. Another, more celebrated, HarperCollins author, John Major, the former Prime Minister, made it clear that he intended to honour his contract to write his political memoirs for the company.

Although News Corp has said only that Mr Murdoch was dissatisfied with the Patten book and disagreed with many of Mr Patten's positions on Hong Kong, most analysts have assumed that the decision was taken to avoid jeopardising future News Corp business interests in China.



Chris Patten: his new book on Hong Kong will be published in September after a change of companies

NEWS IN BRIEF

Princess's will could become best-seller

The will of Diana, Princess of Wales, detailing the beneficiaries of her £21 million fortune, is expected to be published today. Copies of the document will be available for 75p from the Principal Registry of the Family Division at Somerset House, London or £2 by post. The will, which becomes public automatically once probate has been granted, is expected to become a best-seller.

The Princess's 17 godchildren will benefit but the bulk of her estate will be divided between Prince William, 15, and Prince Harry, 13. Each of the godchildren, whose ages range from 2 to 16, will be invited to select a personal item from among the Princess's belongings.

Rees-Jones remembers

Trevor Rees-Jones, the bodyguard who survived the car crash in which Diana, Princess of Wales, and Dodi Fayed were killed, is seeking a further meeting with the French judge investigating the accident. Mr Rees-Jones is employed by Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods. He said yesterday in a statement issued by his solicitors that he had remembered more details about the crash after a series of sessions with a psychiatrist provided by Mr Al Fayed.

Snow ends mild record

The North East had its first snow of the winter and temperatures plummeted across Scotland as the National Meteorological Office compiled final data expected to confirm that February was the mildest since 1869 and driest since 1959. Central England's average temperature last month was 7.3C (45F), 3.5C above normal, and rainfall a quarter of the average. Forecast, page 24

Woodward hearing

Lawyers return to court this week to argue whether the British air pair Louise Woodward, 20, should be sent back to prison for killing a baby in her care. The hearing at Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court on Friday comes after the trial judge changed the jury's murder verdict to manslaughter. The defence wants the conviction quashed and the prosecution wants the murder verdict reinstated.

Aitken to advise GEC

Jonathan Aitken, the former Conservative Defence Minister who lost a libel action against *The Guardian* and Granada Television last year, has joined GEC. He is expected to use his extensive contacts in Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region to promote the company's arms exports. A spokesman for GEC said that Mr Aitken was joining as an adviser for business in the Middle East.

NHS millennium bug

Frank Dobson is to launch a campaign to safeguard hospitals against the millennium computer bug. The Health Secretary is to hold talks with Alan Langlands, the chief executive of the NHS Executive, to ensure that all NHS trusts are prepared. Health officials fear that thousands of lives could be put at risk unless NHS computers are adjusted before 2000.

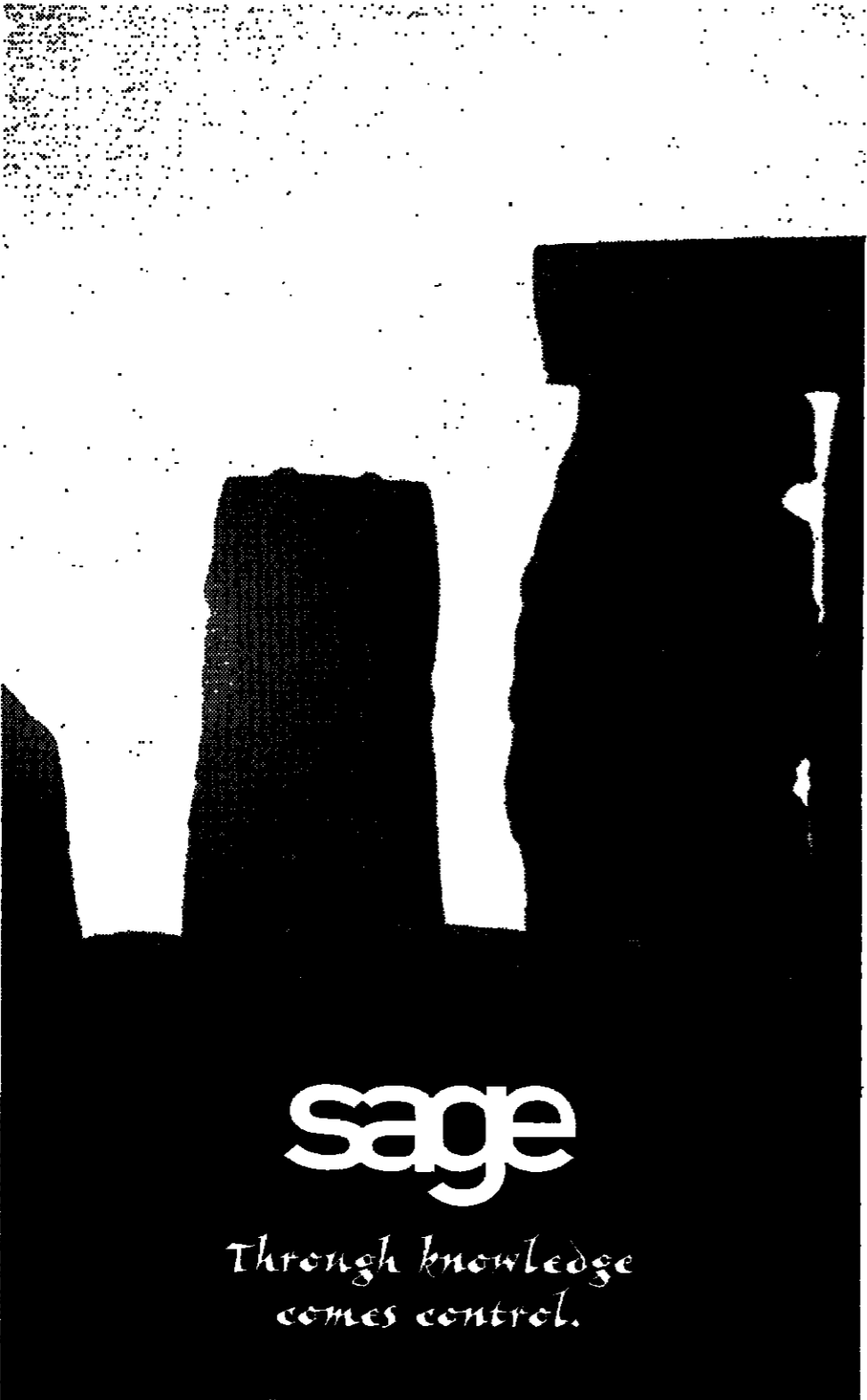
Negligence claims up

Negligence claims against doctors performing keyhole surgery have increased 50 per cent over seven years, according to a survey by the Medical Defence Union. Such claims now account for one in eight of all the cases handled by the union. A quarter of the keyhole negligence claims involved perforation of the intestines or blood vessels.

Science on the Tube

London Underground passengers will soon be able to test their scientific knowledge. A series of four posters, in cartoon format, displayed in 4,000 carriages will ask questions including: will a snowman melt more quickly if he is wearing a coat? The idea, by a husband and wife team at Manchester Metropolitan University, aims to emulate the success of *Poems on the Underground*.

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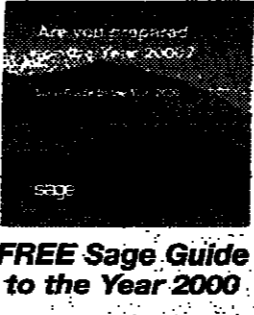
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Handwritten signatures and notes

Father Ted star dies of heart attack, aged 45

Audrey Magee hears tributes to Dermot Morgan

DERMOT MORGAN, the Irish comedian and satirist best-known for his television role as Father Ted, died suddenly yesterday morning after hosting a dinner for family and friends. He would have been 46 tomorrow.

On Friday night, Morgan had celebrated the completion of the third and final series of *Father Ted*, the enormously successful comedy about three Irish Catholic priests and their housekeeper living on the remote Craggy Island, with his fellow actors and the production team.

On Saturday night, he and his partner of 11 years, Fiona Clarke, gave a dinner for family and friends at their home in southwest London. Just before midnight, Morgan collapsed, never to regain consciousness. He is believed to have suffered a heart attack. Doctors at the West Middlesex Hospital battled for 25 minutes to save the silver-haired actor, but he died at soon after midnight.

He had three children, one

by Miss Clarke, and two with his wife, Suzanne, from whom he had been separated for some years.

Friends and colleagues paid tribute to the comedian yesterday. Frank Kelly, a fellow *Father Ted* actor, said the death of his colleague had left him "shattered and traumatised". Kelly, who plays the elderly drunken cleric Father Jack, said: "I was taping a programme with him on Friday night and I have only just got back to London. Who can predict something like this is going to happen?"

He added: "Dermot's mind was mercurial. He was able to get on top of a very big role. He was very, very professional about this whole thing. I think that he was a kind of comedic meteor. He literally burnt himself out, I think."

Arthur Matthews, who wrote the show with Graham Linehan, said: "He was very easy to write for, it was brilliant in it. And he got recognition for being brilliant in it. It is not that easy a role

and I cannot imagine anyone else having done it. He really made it his own."

Father Brian Darcy, a Roman Catholic priest thought to be the inspiration for Morgan's early satirical creation, Father Brian Trendy, said: "He had struggled a lot in his life and Father Ted had given him the ground to move into something else. I know he wanted this to be the last one. He thought he had done enough on it and he told me that himself."

Michael Jackson, chief executive of Channel 4, said: "All of us at Channel 4 are shocked and deeply stunned to think that so talented an actor and performer should have his life cut short at the peak of his career."

Many of those Morgan ridiculed were among the first to praise his talents. Charles Haughey, who took regular soundings from Morgan on his RTE show, *Sunday Saturday*, said that he would be greatly missed as a talented and innovative professional.

Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, said Morgan was "a prince among the new generation of Irish comedians", and Mary McAleese, the Irish President, described him as a "gifted entertainer who brought pleasure to so many people here in Ireland and abroad".

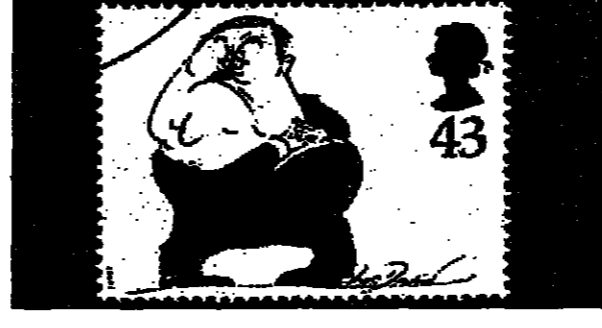
The third series of *Father Ted* is scheduled to be broadcast on Friday night. The opening episode, typically, flirts with controversy, as Father Ted lands in trouble for doing impersonations of Craggy Island's Chinese community.

Channel 4 said last night that it would not take a final decision on the broadcast until it had consulted Morgan's family.



Dermot Morgan, centre, and the cast of *Father Ted*

Obituary, page 23



Five of the best, as drawn by Gerald Scarfe. The set of Tommy Cooper, Eric Morecambe, Joyce Grenfell, Les Dawson and Peter Cook is issued next month

New issue for comics with the stamp of greatness

By PHILIP DELVES BRIGHTON

IF COMEDY is a serious business, then choosing the top five British comedians of all time must be advanced neurosurgery.

The Royal Mail has put its sense of humour on the line with a new set of stamps in honour of the nation's funniest. Their choice should satisfy most, if not all, tastes: Eric Morecambe, Tommy Cooper, Les Dawson, Peter Cook and Joyce Grenfell.

They are portrayed with caricatures drawn by Gerald Scarfe. Tommy Cooper's inside-out face and fez are depicted on the first class stamp above Cooper's catchphrase, "Just like that".

Eric Morecambe is on the 20p stamp, though without the short, fat, sairy one, Ernie Wise. On the 37p stamp is Joyce Grenfell, regarded as the first woman stand-up comedian. She was renowned for the devastating wit she would produce from behind her school-marmish demeanour.

Les Dawson appears on the 43p stamp, his face, as it always was, seemingly on the point of a gurn and a seaside innuendo. Peter Cook, who died in 1995 having inspired *Beyond the Fringe* and *Private Eye*, gazes droopily out of the 63p stamp.

In drawing up the shortlist the Royal Mail asked a number of modern comedians to name their favourite comedians and the ones who had had the most influence upon them.

Giles Ffrench, the Royal Mail's marketing manager, said: "I'm sure there will be a lot of debate over the choice because everyone has their own favourite. But I don't think anyone could say these people we have chosen should not be on the stamps." The issue goes on sale on April 23.



Waterman's: £5-a-head menu for royal party

Princess cuts costs with a Times coupon

By EMMA WILKINS

EVEN royalty wants value for money, so it should have been no surprise when the Princess Royal took advantage of the "Eat out for £5" offer from *The Times*.

The Princess, who receives £228,000 a year from the Queen, had a table booked at Waterman's — a bistro in Nailsworth, Gloucestershire, just up the road from her Gatcombe Park estate, which is taking part in the scheme. She had only to cut out two coupons and a voucher from *The Times* to qualify.

Sarah and John Waterman, who own the restaurant, were delighted but surprised when the royal party arrived — the table had been booked in the name of Mr Wilcox. Other diners at the restaurant, which has two AA rosettes, looked up in amazement as Timothy Laurence, who earns £45,000 as a Royal Navy captain, handed over the voucher and asked for the £5-a-head menu.

He told the manager that he had not filled in the address on the back of the voucher "for security reasons".

The Princess's bodyguard, who was also eating from the £5 menu, sat at a separate table while the royal party chose curried parsnip soup followed by venison sausages, fish and puddings.

They paid extra for a bottle of house red wine and some mineral water. A three-course



Princess Royal: took advantage of offer

meal for seven without discount could have cost about £145 so the Princess saved about £80 by collecting the coupons.

Sarah Waterman said yesterday after news of the visit appeared in a newspaper: "I'm embarrassed because we like to preserve the privacy of our customers and we have been in contact with Gatcombe to tell them that the article had nothing to do with us. It must have been one of the other diners that tipped off the paper, or told someone else."

"As for the promotion, we have had great fun with this offer. We have served 654 people in a 24-cover restaurant. We're knackered but it has been great taking part."

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*An unusual feature of the Personal Choice Mortgage is that there is no restriction on the number of times that monthly payments can be increased or decreased, or payment holidays taken. The only proviso is that an agreed overall balance is maintained.



Mr and Mrs Allen are aged 48 and 47 and live in Liverpool. They have two children who are at school: James (13) and Sarah (16) who is entering the sixth form this year. Mr Allen is a policeman and Mrs Allen a college lecturer. The Allens are attracted to the flexibility of a Personal Choice Mortgage and the free remortgage package, because Mrs Allen is going to become self-employed and work from home providing special courses to senior students.

By transferring a mortgage of £70,000 against a property value of £120,000 they will be able to increase and decrease their monthly payments, take payment holidays, and pay in lump sums from time to time depending on how well Mrs Allen is doing. They also intend to use their cheque book facility to help Sarah when she goes up to University in two years time.

Susan Oliver is aged 29 and single. She lives in Oxford and works as a freelance journalist. Susan intends studying for an MBA while continuing her work and is remortgaging her flat with a loan of £35,000 against a value of £65,000. She will raise capital of £10,000 with her Personal Choice Mortgage and use it to help to fund her studies. The free remortgage package and flexibility were key factors in her decision to switch her mortgage to Bank of Scotland Mortgages Direct.

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Navy officer with the Nelson touch

Rear admiral is being promoted straight into the top rank, Michael Evans reports



Essenhigh: goes to work on a motorcycle

THE Royal Navy is expected to break with tradition, as it did with the young Captain Horatio Nelson when he was made admiral, to promote an exceptional officer over the heads of more senior ranks.

Nelson was appointed captain in 1779 at the age of 20, rear admiral at 38, and at 45 was given the command in the Mediterranean. Two years later he defeated Napoleon in the battle of Trafalgar.

admiral who had served his time as a two-star and three-star officer.

However, Admiral Sir Jock Slater, the outgoing First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff, has clearly decided that Rear Admiral Essenhigh is the best man for the job and that he should skip the vice-admiral rank and go straight to full admiral.

Sir Jock has been keen to inject modern management practice into the Royal Navy's career structure and to prove to new recruits that a traditional Service such as the Navy is ready to give more rapid promotion to younger officers with exceptional talents. Rear

Admiral Essenhigh, largely unknown to the public, is 53. He was promoted to rear admiral at the age of 38 and is at present Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (programmes). He is expected to take up his new post of Commander-in-Chief Fleet based at the headquarters at Northwood, west of London, later this year.

There are six vice-admirals. Three have NATO appointments, two have Royal Navy jobs and one, Vice-Admiral Alan West, has recently taken over the tri-service post of Chief of Defence Intelligence.

Sir Jock, who is to retire in October, is being succeeded by Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, the current Commander-in-Chief Fleet. There are only three four-star posts: First Sea Lord, Second Sea Lord and Commander-in-Chief Fleet. There is a fourth full admiral at

the Ministry of Defence, Admiral Sir Peter Abbott, who holds the tri-service appointment of Vice Chief of the Defence Staff.

Rear Admiral Essenhigh, who was born in Newcastle upon Tyne and is proud of being a Geordie, joined the Royal Navy in 1963. He qualified as a warfare officer in 1972 and is a navigation specialist. His career has been spent mainly at sea but he has held a number of appointments in the Ministry of Defence. He has served in 10 ships, ranging from frigates to an aircraft carrier. In his last command he was Captain of the 5th Destroyer Squadron in HMS Exeter and saw service in the Gulf War in 1991.

Rear Admiral Essenhigh, who is a keen motorcyclist and often rides to work at the MoD on a motorbike, lives in Devon with his wife, Susie, and his three children.

Sacked major says he was assaulted

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

AN ARMY major dismissed after seven months of open rebellion has accused a senior Royal Military Police officer of assault.

Major Eric Joyce, 37, who escaped court martial last year despite publishing an unauthorised pamphlet accusing the Army of elitism, sexism and racism, was told his career was finished in an interview with his commanding officer on Friday.

Major Joyce, who said his dismissal was "a blow for free speech and a victory for the reactionary forces in the Army", said that he had been

assaulted by a colonel in the Royal Military Police. The Ministry of Defence confirmed that Major Joyce had made a formal complaint against a fellow army officer following an "altercation which took place during an interview".

The allegation is now being investigated by the RAF Military Police. Normally an alleged incident involving army officers would be investigated by the Royal Military Police. "But in this case, because a Royal Military Police officer is involved, the inquiry has been handed to the RAF police," the

MoD said. The incident occurred two weeks before Major Joyce was told that he had been fired. Major Joyce's sacking came after he had continued to make critical comments about the Army. His rebellion had increasingly infuriated his superiors and ministers.

On Friday he was called in to see Brigadier David Harrison, his commanding officer, and was accused of "arrogance, insubordination and uncommandability". He was told that his 14-year army career was over. Brigadier Harrison's decision will have to be confirmed by the Army

Board. Yesterday the MoD spokesman would not confirm that Major Joyce had been sacked. The official said that he had been interviewed and "made aware of recommendations about his future".

Last August Major Joyce broke strict rules by publishing a damning article in a pamphlet by the leftwing Fabian Society. He accused the Army of being sexist, racist and snobbish. He said senior commanders were all from public schools and called for radical reform.

He was saved from court martial after the Army decided to give him a second chance. Unusually, Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, intervened, advising against dismissal. Major Joyce, who works for the Adjutant General's Corps, came to an agreement with Brigadier Harrison that he would make no further unauthorised statements to the media.

However, ministers and senior officers were taken aback when Major Joyce appeared to ignore the agreement and continued to make numerous critical statements on television and radio and in newspaper interviews.



Gordon Main: woman won job he wanted

Male nurse wins RAF bias case

By IAN MURRAY

Ramstein air base in Germany. The job description did not specify that applicants should be women and because he had 14 years' nursing experience in the RAF, including six as a practice nurse, he believed he stood a good chance of getting the posting.

A MALE RAF nurse has won an undisclosed out-of-court settlement for sex discrimination from the Ministry of Defence after a woman nurse with fewer qualifications or less experience was given a posting for which he had applied.

Gordon Main, a sergeant-level qualified nurse with the Princess Mary's RAF Nursing Service, answered an advertisement 18 months ago for a position in a practice at the RAF medical centre at

"I wasn't even short-listed," Mr Main, married with two children, said yesterday.

"I didn't do it for money but as a point of principle to help other service personnel in future."

HE WHO DARES MAY BE A CONFIDENCE TRICKSTER

CON men are studying books about the SAS to win phoney injury compensation claims and war pensions, and to raise their self-esteem (Ian Murray writes).

The warning of "fictitious claims" comes from Martin Baggaley, former officer-commanding of the Defence Services Psychiatric Centre. He says information gleaned from books such as *Born to Run* by

the former SAS sergeant Andy McNab, had fooled military officials and so "it is probable that the problem is more widespread in civilian settings".

Writing in the *Psychiatric Bulletin* of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, he says patients with "dramatic stories of military trauma" may be suffering from military Munchausen's rather than post-traumatic stress disorder. Munchausen's syndrome is a condition in which the sufferer complains of pretend or self-induced symptoms.

Dr Baggaley says the SAS has "a particular glamour" that attracts con men. "Often this is introduced in hushed tones or using euphemisms such as 'Herford' or 'the Unit' but genuine members of the SAS are secretive."

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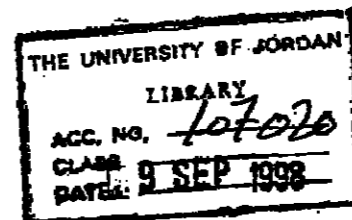


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Retired may get pension top-up

By PHILIP WEBSTER

PENSIONERS would be guaranteed a minimum income equivalent to about £100 a week for a single retired person under proposals expected to be published shortly in the Government's Green Paper on welfare reform.

The move, backed by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, is designed to deal with the problem of the million or so pensioners who live in difficulty because they do not claim the means-tested benefits available to them. Under the proposal, pensioners would have their state pension topped up if any other income left them below the chosen threshold.

Labour plans to stop Livingstone becoming mayor

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

SENIOR Labour figures are planning to prevent the left-wing MP Ken Livingstone standing as the party's candidate for the mayor of London.

Cabinet members are proposing that the ruling national executive be given a veto over the names that will be put to members for final selection. That would ensure that Mr Livingstone, the former leader of the Greater London Council, was excluded.

Mr Livingstone's opponents admit that it will be hard to keep him out of the race but say that his election would be disastrous. "Tony Blair did

not revive the concept of a London mayor to give Ken Livingstone back to the people of London," a senior minister said.

Other potential candidates are being urged to make their interest in the post known to show the membership in London — who will have the final say on a one member-one vote basis — that there are alternatives.

Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, who Labour insiders had hoped might be encouraged to stand and almost certainly win the Labour nomination, has ruled himself

out of the contest. A close friend said that all his energies were concentrated on improving the health service and that he loved the job he was doing.

Glenda Jackson, the Transport Minister, Trevor Phillips, the broadcaster, and Tony Banks, the Sports Minister, are among the Labour names that have so far been mentioned for the post.

Tony Blair is expected to avoid endorsing any of the candidates because it is feared that independent-minded London activists will resent having anybody imposed upon them.

The idea of a veto is being proposed by senior party sources and ministers who believe that a means of stopping Mr Livingstone will have to be found to avoid the risk that he could be chosen and become a running embarrassment to the Government.

They say that the national executive, which is the party's ruling body responsible for carrying out the will of its sovereign body, the conference, should have a clear role in drawing up the shortlist of candidates.

The NEC already has powers to draw up shortlists for by-elections to prevent unsuitable candidates going before the local parties for selection and there are similar safeguards for the choice of candi-



Ken Livingstone: senior party members want to exclude him as mayoral candidate

PROTEST OVER TV CANDIDATE

By NICHOLAS WOOD

The Conservative Party has protested to the Independent Television Commission about Trevor Phillips, right, the broadcaster tipped as Tony Blair's favourite candidate for London's first elected mayor. Tories are demanding an inquiry by Sir Robin Biggam, the commission's chairman, into Mr Phillips's role as "convector" of the campaign for a Yes vote in the London referendum in May.



They are claiming that the campaign is a Labour Party front designed to promote Mr Phillips's candidature and that he is being allowed to present current affairs programmes while pursuing his political ambitions.

dates for the European parliamentary elections. Although Mr Livingstone was elected to the NEC in September, beating Peter Mandelson, he would have little chance of getting on an executive-approved shortlist.

He would have to resign from the party to stand against an official candidate and would certainly then lose.

Some ministers, however, believe that Mr Livingstone's popularity has been overstated since the GLC was abolished by the Conservatives in 1986.

"The GLC was popular with London Labour people — Ken was not particularly. Memories may be playing tricks on some people," one said.

Another said: "In a fair contest with a good candidate Ken Livingstone would not win."

Mr Livingstone said yesterday that he would stand as mayor only if the Government

gave real powers to the post and the London assembly in its White Paper. He said: "I am not going to do anything until I have seen the White Paper."

"If they give tax-raising powers I will run. If they don't, I won't. The mayor has got to have real powers."

The referendum for a London mayor and a new authority is to be held on May 7. The first mayor will not be in place until 2000.

Glasgow to host launch of Scottish parliament

By GILLIAN HARRIS

AN unprepossessing former council headquarters in Glasgow is expected to house the first session of the Scottish parliament when it convenes in January 2000.

Strathclyde House, which used to be home to Strathclyde Regional Council, has emerged as the favoured site to host a temporary parliament while permanent accommodation at Holyrood, Edinburgh, is built. The site in Glasgow, close to the city's red-light district, has a debating chamber and offices that could be used by members of the Scottish parliament until their purpose-built headquarters are finished in autumn 2001.

Although Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, is considering another two sites in Edinburgh before making his decision next month, Strathclyde House is thought to be the frontrunner. It is being seen as a pragmatic choice rather than a symbolic one, offering cheap accommodation with everyone under one roof.

Civil servants advising Scottish Office ministers have given warning that the two alternatives — old Royal High School at Calton Hill and the Church of Scotland's General Assembly building — are too small to house the 129 members of parliament and their administrative staff.

George Reid, the Scottish National Party's constitutional affairs spokesman, who is also a member of the cross-party committee that will help to decide on the site, opposes the idea of the parliament being based at Strathclyde House. He said: "Until now Mr Dewar has always been adamant that the parliament must sit in Edinburgh. This latest notion associates the parliament with Strathclyde region. It downgrades our national legislature by linking it with a defunct local authority."

Raymond Robertson, chairman of the Scottish Conservative Party, said yesterday: "It is just not good enough to now be floating the idea of temporary sites around the country."



Strathclyde House, where members will sit until 2001

NEWS IN BRIEF

Schoolgirl boxers to fight in secrecy

A boxing match between two girls, postponed last year because of controversy, is expected to go ahead tomorrow, scheduled in secret. Emma Brannigan and Andrea Prince, both 14, will fight in Stoke-on-Trent. The Amateur Boxing Association is understood to have told them and their families not to discuss the fight. Andrea's mother, Tina, from Leicester, said: "We do not want anything to disturb her."

Murder charge

A youth of 16 was charged yesterday with the murder of Steven Harding, also 16, from Basildon, Essex. The victim died from a single stab wound at the town's general hospital on Friday night.

Crash victim

A man aged 29 died when his stolen car was being driven. Police found the accident shortly after seeing the Ford Fiesta being driven erratically in Worthing, West Sussex, at about 5am yesterday.

Body found

A woman's body has been found in a car in the red-light area of Glasgow. The woman, who has not been named, is thought to be the seventh prostitute to have been murdered in the city since 1991.

Illegal entry

Thirteen suspected illegal immigrants were arrested at a roadside cafe after travelling from Germany to Britain in the back of a lorry. They were detained by the A1 near Grantham, Lincolnshire.

Just the ticket

A girl sick of getting wet at a bus stop built her own shelter. Clare Lewis, 14, missed the exit of the school shelter in Study Camp, Cambridgeshire, when permission was found a carpenter to construct it.

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Power auction begins in Delhi

An 80-year-old Calcutta Communist is a key player in India's post-election talks, Christopher Thomas reports

COUNTING begins today after India's general election, which looks certain to produce another "hung" parliament and prolonged political turmoil. The shape of the next administration will be determined during several days of bribery and backroom deals, beginning after the declaration of results tonight and tomorrow.

One of the key players in the coming days will be an elderly Marxist who harbours dreams of becoming India's first Communist Prime Minister. Jyoti Basu, 83, has been Chief Minister of West Bengal and its capital, Calcutta, for 21 years and articulates policies — even if he does not follow them — as dated as his hammer-and-sickle symbol.

He will head for Delhi to throw himself into the post-election horse-trading, as it is euphemistically known. The practice is also known as suitcase politics, because of the large bags of money that are handed around in an ill-concealed travesty of the world's biggest democratic exercise. Independent MPs, their votes uncommitted, can enrich themselves fabulously in a few days.

Exit polls support expectations that no party will secure a majority because of a resurgence of regional identities and the rise of Hindu-based politics. The era of coalition governments is now well established after 42 years of rule

by the Congress Party in the past half-century. The pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), feared by Muslims for past atrocities, looks likely to capture the single largest number of seats.

But Congress and its political enemy, the United Front, a loose coalition of centrist and left-wing parties, may be able to outvote it in the Lok Sabha (the lower house of parliament), assuming they can form an alliance.

Mr Basu will be an influential voice in seeking to turn foes into friends for the sake of political power and, he will argue, to halt the BJP's threat to India's secular character. It will be hard for some parties, however, to align with Congress, which is widely loathed for throwing India unnecessarily into an election because of a bungled bid for power by Sinaran Kesri, its 80-year-old president. He may now be ousted.

Mr Basu's career, however, is far from over. In the 1996 general election, he almost emerged as Prime Minister in the post-poll turmoil, but succumbed to pressure within his party to remain in Calcutta. His chance of succeeding this time will dwindle if Congress, as expected, gains more seats than the United Front.

Congress has been saved by Sonia Gandhi, whose decision to become its star campaigner stopped defections and fired up campaigners by sole virtue



Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity wait at St Teresa's church in Calcutta to cast their votes yesterday

of her name. She will have a decisive say in choosing a Congress Prime Minister, giving her immense behind-the-scenes power but no official position. She has said repeatedly that she seeks no office, but the party is hers if she wants it.

She would find no difficulty

in inviting Mr Basu's Marxists to share power with Congress, even if they do continue to scare industrialists with slogans designed to stir Calcutta's powerful trade union movement. For decades, no big industrialists would venture near West Bengal unless they absolutely had to, and

they remain wary, despite all Mr Basu's efforts to lure them back.

Many remember the *gharao* — the tactic of entrapping a man within a silent crowd until a particular demand was granted. The spectacle of wealthy men waiting themselves after hours of standing

in hot sun sent money flying out of the state. But Mr Basu, a master of political manipulation, says the Marxists have reformed. His skills of persuasion will be in high demand in the coming week, possibly longer, as he helps to make sense of what is likely to be another electoral mess.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Suharto says IMF aid not working

Jakarta: President Suharto yesterday opened Indonesia's People's Consultative Assembly, the electoral college which is expected to re-elect him for a seventh consecutive term, with a call to the country to fight harder to beat the worst recession in 30 years as international help is proving ineffective.

Since last July the rupiah has lost more than 70 per cent of its value against the dollar, causing food prices to soar and social unrest. Mr Suharto, 76, said the \$43 billion (£26 billion) IMF aid — in return for reforms — "had failed to resuscitate the economy". It is believed he is preparing to peg the rupiah to the US dollar to restore confidence in the economy. Mr Suharto, who has ruled Indonesia for 32 years with an iron grip, is the sole candidate in the March 10 poll.

Burmese junta arrests 40

Rangoon: The Burmese junta arrested 40 people it accused of planning a campaign of bombing and assassination. The Government said the plot was masterminded by the All-Burma Students' Democratic Front, but a spokesman for the group said it had given up armed struggle last year for "non-violent, political defiance". The Government said the student insurgents were linked to the party of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi. (AP)

Mobile phone protection

Abu Dhabi: A Sudanese engineer said he has invented a way to protect Arab mobile telephone users from radiation by adding some chemicals to their traditional headdress. Ali Halib Muhammad, an electrical engineer in the United Arab Emirates, said he had briefed mobile phone giants on his invention, which has been patented. It is claimed that mobile phones can subject the user to electromagnetic radiation, suspected of causing cancer. (AFP)

Cash to clear up El Alamein

Cairo: The World Bank wants to assist Egypt in clearing an estimated 17 million landmines left over from the Second World War in El Alamein, where Britain's 8th Army halted Nazi Germany's thrust towards the Suez Canal, to boost investments there. Egypt estimates it will cost £122 million and argues that, since it did not plant the mines, it should not be expected to foot the bill. Britain and the European Union have already offered more than £1.5 million. (AP)

North Korea opens skies

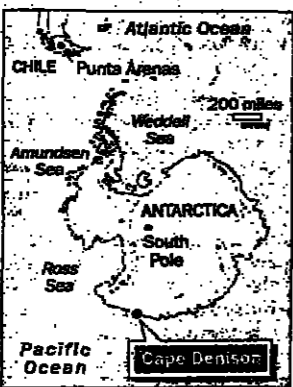
Hong Kong: A Cathay Pacific cargo freighter touched down in Hong Kong after a historic flight through North Korea's heavily guarded airspace, the first by a non-Korean airline since the 1950-53 Korean War. A South Korean official said that, with the opening of North Korea's skies and unrestricted use of what is known as the Kamchatka route over Russia, airlines can shave between 20 and 50 minutes off flight times on US-Seoul routes. (AFP)

Septuplets crowd nursery

Dubai: A Saudi hospital has threatened to call the police if the parents of seven-week-old septuplets fail to take their babies home. Four of the babies have been issued with discharge slips, but their parents say they are not ready to take them home. Doctors at Abha Maternity Hospital say the nursery is overcrowded and they are losing patience. (AP)

£50,000 holiday on offer, sub-zero gales guaranteed

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY



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Denison in the Antarctic. That is the icy prospect awaiting holidaymakers in one of the most inhospitable and remote corners of the globe. The package was advertised in Australia at the weekend and is the idea of Don and Margie McIntyre, who have already done it themselves.

They spent the whole of 1995 in an isolated igloo and have no doubt it provided the experience of a lifetime. Don, 43, and his 37-year-old wife say

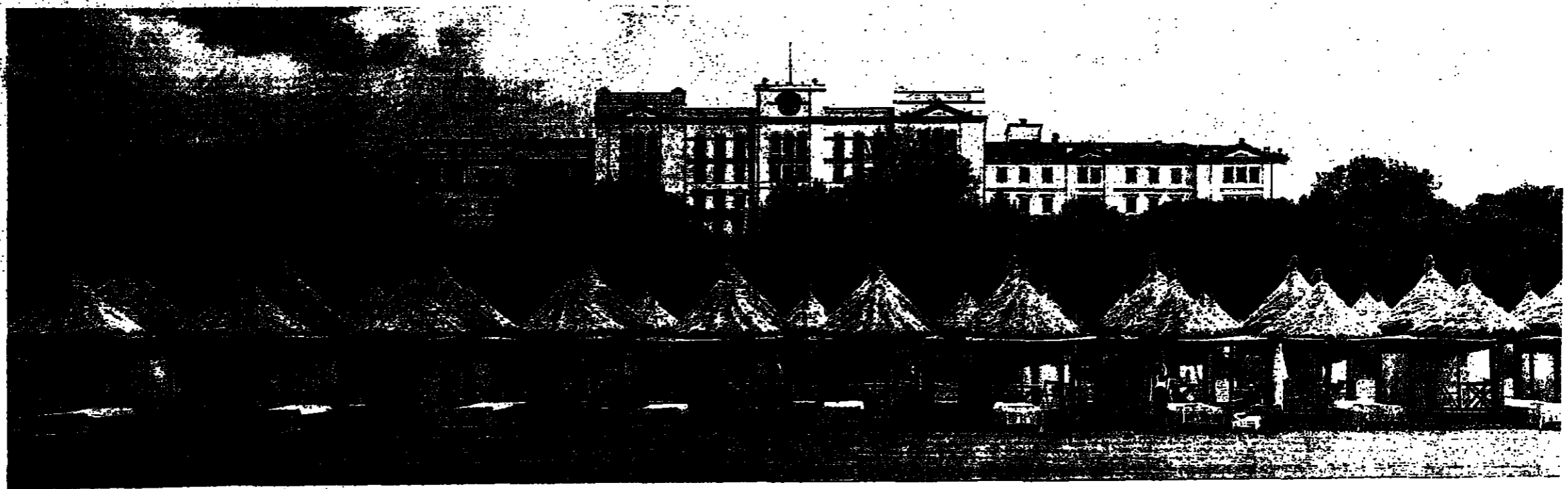
anyone interested in using their Antarctic home has to be prepared for risk. "They'll sign contracts saying they won't ask to be rescued because no one can get in during the winter months," he said. "If you get into trouble, you're on your own."

For those used to the comforts of central heating and five-star luxury, this might sound like a holiday in hell. But there are plenty of people who are not put off by the prospect.

So what does the holidaymaker get for the money? Accommodation is a prefabricated box modelled on the sort of refrigerated container used in the Outback to store kangaroo carcasses. The return trip is by boat. Training is provided, as are fuel, equipment such as ice axes and sleds, satellite communications and the necessary permits. But food is extra.

Naturally, there will be no problem freezing the meat.

Photographed at Sheraton's Hotel Des Bains, Venice Lido, Italy



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Israel seizes gun shipment on way to Palestinians

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI troops intercepted a weapons shipment as it was being smuggled across the Dead Sea from Jordan on Friday night. The Israeli Chief of Staff told the Cabinet yesterday that it had been destined for elements in Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

The two boatloads of arms seized near Ein Fashha contained the biggest quantity of smuggled weapons in recent years. Military sources said the shipment included 60 AK-47 and M16 assault rifles, seven shotguns, 39 pistols and thousands of rounds of ammunition.

A senior Western security expert said the discovery was evidence that the Palestinian Authority was stockpiling weapons in anticipation of an all-out confrontation with Israeli forces in the event of a complete collapse in the peace process, deadlocked for the past 12 months.

Sect seeks boys for life of purity

Jerusalem: An ultra-Orthodox Jewish sect is searching for parents willing to hand over newborn sons to be raised in isolation and purity in preparation for the rebuilding of the biblical Temple of Jerusalem, which was destroyed in AD 70. The Movement for Establishing the Temple wants to keep the children in a compound in the hills of Jerusalem. (Reuters)

made the crossing under the cover of darkness. In recent days Palestinian leaders have been expressing increasing frustration at the prospects of restarting peace talks with the Israeli Government. These were broken off last March when Israel began constructing a settlement for 32,000 Jews at Har Homa in east Jerusalem. The smuggling attempt was thwarted after suspicious movements were noted from an Israeli army observation post on the shores of the Dead Sea and a helicopter with searchlights was called in. Attention was given to the Ein Fashha area which is densely covered by trees and foliage. One of the searchers said: "Suddenly across from us at

point-blank range stood a man holding his arms up." The exercise was evidence of renewed co-operation between Israeli and Jordanian security forces, ordered by King Hussein after last week's resignation of Danny Yatom, the discredited Mossad spy chief. The latter had been responsible for September's bungled Israeli attempt to assassinate a Hamas leader in the Jordanian capital, Amman.

In a separate development, it was announced that Yitzhak Mordechai, the Israeli Defence Minister, will travel to France this week for talks about Israel's occupying troops in the south Lebanon buffer zone. At yesterday's Cabinet session both Mr Mordechai and Binyamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, said Israel was prepared to withdraw under Israel's interpretation of United Nations Resolution 425 which would entail the Lebanese Army guaranteeing the security of Israel's northern border. Any such move is considered unlikely without a peace deal with Syria. Gaza City: Palestinian security forces discovered an arms cache during an overnight raid in Gaza and arrested several suspects, Palestinian officials said yesterday. The haul included bomb-making material. (AFP)

Leading article, page 21



Pinna Rosenblum, 43, targets social problems to win support for her new party

Sex symbol has her eyes on a Knesset career

A FORMER top Israeli model turned businesswoman, Pinna Rosenblum, has moved from the catwalk to the hustings and launched a new centrist political party.

A favourite of the gossip columns and television talk shows, Ms Rosenblum, 43, is chief executive of Israel's leading cosmetics marketing company. She was not taken seriously by the political classes until last month when a mock election placed her Tnuva ("Booster") Party fourth among the 11 main parties.

The poll, at Tel Aviv's Blich High School, is something of a national weather-vane, having forecasted Likud's unexpected victory in 1977 and Labour's triumph in 1992. This year the first-time contender scored a surprise 7 per cent of the vote. Ms Rosenblum, a brown-eyed blonde who was discharged after eight months of her two-year compulsory army service because her looks distracted the troops, said of her move into the cut-throat world of politics: "When I see 700,000 people living below the poverty line, when I see our people so divided, when I see all of these social and economic problems, I say that this country needs a change." Israel's small political parties wield disproportionately heavy influence in a parliament where coalition governments traditionally rule by the narrowest of majorities. Ms Rosenblum, a millionairess once reared in poverty by her Iraqi-born mother, is hop-

Israeli celebrity has exploited her beauty to win unexpected new political respect, Christopher Thomas reports

ing to capture at least three of the 120 seats in the next Knesset, due to be elected in 2000. She claimed she would win "enough power to make an impact", although pundits predict she will gain only one seat — for herself. "She knows how to market herself in the right way. There is no doubt that she will get elected," said an admiring driver in Raanana, a smart Tel Aviv suburb. "Pinna Rosenblum is like Israel's Madonna. In that she took her image as a sex symbol and exploited it for her own empowerment," said Calev Ben-David, a Jerusalem Post columnist. "Unlike many other supermodels who vanished as they aged, she made the transition into a public figure and successful businesswoman. She took charge of her career and surprised a lot of people, never turning her back on her sex symbol image," he added. Ms Rosenblum — now married — has won support from the Israel Women's Network — but only after heated internal debate. Some felt her blatant use of her looks to win votes was anti-feminist.

Relatives of British nurses hear of hopes for early release on visit to Saudi jail



Lucille McLauchlan, left, and Deborah Parry

THE two British nurses imprisoned in Saudi Arabia for murdering a colleague are expected to fly home soon, their lawyer said last night. But underlining the confusion that has typified the case, the news came as a total surprise to the nurses' relatives who spent 2½ hours visiting them yesterday. Lucille McLauchlan and Deborah Parry are unlikely to be sentenced to more than 18 months in prison when the Saudi Interior Ministry meets to consider their case, the nurses' lawyer, Salah al-

Lawyers say appeal ruling is likely soon, Michael Theodoulou writes

Hejailan, said. The 15 months each has already spent in the women's wing of Damman prison in Dhahran will be deducted from any sentence which will be communicated to the Saudi ruler, King Fahd. He has the power to order their immediate release. Speaking from Riyadh, the capital, Mr Hejailan said that the complex appeals process was completed a month ago


and they are not in very good health," Mr Hejailan said. "They expect to be freed soon." Yesterday Ms Parry was visited in prison by her sister and brother-in-law, Sandra and Jonathan Ashbee, who brought letters from friends and family. "We've heard nothing about this yet, but will be in touch with Mr Hejailan as soon as possible. Obviously, it's very good news if it is true," Mr Ashbee said. "Deborah was down in the dumps because she doesn't know what's happening. We

haven't even had a verdict yet. Up to now, she's been thinking she could be spending up to 15 years in that prison." Ms McLauchlan was visited by Grant Ferrie, who married her in prison last year. Ms McLauchlan, 32, from Dundee, was sentenced to 500 lashes and eight years in prison for being an accessory in the murder of Yvonne Gilford, a fellow nurse. The 55-year-old Australian was beaten, suffocated and stabbed at the King Fahd Military Medical Centre in December 1996. Her British

colleagues, who have always maintained their innocence, were arrested six days later. Ms Parry, 40, from Alton, Hampshire, was saved from a possible sentence of public beheading on the promise of payment of £730,000 in "blood money" to the victim's brother, Frank Gilford. In January, she was moved to the prison's hospital wing after doctors became concerned at her suicidal state. She was recently returned to the women's wing. "Deborah is okay now," Mr Hejailan said.

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Chancellor has to convince voters he can still win euro marathon

Leaders who want to survive two terms in office, or more, have to build up popular trust. That truism can best be illustrated by comparing the seemingly solid but actually rather shaky presidency of Bill Clinton with the 15-year reign of Helmut Kohl.

At a so-called "town meeting" in Ohio recently, senior members of the US Administration were shouted down by critics of Mr Clinton's (and Tony Blair's) tough military line on Iraq. Why was the President suddenly so vulnerable? Because, nowadays, to take a nation into war requires the kind of public confidence that has been so

INSIDE GERMANY



BY ROGER BOYES

quickly eroded by the reports of Mr Clinton's hit-and-run sexual escapades. Few Americans believed that the President should surrender office because of the sex claims, but

many plainly developed second thoughts about his judgment.

The German leader has, over the years, managed to override the doubts of his voters — about the price of unification, for example — and present himself as the indispensable helmsman. Public scepticism is turned into an asset rather than a constraint. Thus two thirds of the German populace are still hostile to the euro, but the same proportion regard it as inevitable. This paradox can lead to two possible outcomes: either deep resignation that makes for an uncertain result in September's general election, or the

feeling that the euro, unpopular but unavoidable, demands the steady predictable leadership of Herr Kohl.

Politics in Germany is becoming more personal as a result of this paradox. The decision on whether Gerhard Schröder, Prime Minister of Lower Saxony, will be allowed to challenge Herr Kohl on behalf of the Social Democrats will probably be made today at a party executive board meeting. The formal choice of Herr Schröder or the party chairman, Oskar Lafontaine, is not expected until the Social Democratic conference on March 16. The timing

coincides with critical choices about the euro. How strict should Germany be with the EMU (economic and monetary union) candidates which overshoot the total debt target — Italy and (to a lesser degree) Belgium?

Whoever challenges Herr Kohl has to capture the trust of the Germans on the euro issue with remarkable speed, indeed within weeks. Herr Lafontaine used to be sceptical — circa 1995 — but is now a zealot, in common with most of the party leadership, though not the rank and file. Herr Schröder used to press for a delay in the euro's introduction rather than a softening of the entry criteria.

If he is to be the official rival to Herr Kohl, this might be a useful position to occupy for the next few weeks — insisting on no political fudge, on a strict reading by both the parliament and the constitutional court.

Herr Schröder needs to win the confidence of the Germans if he is to beat Herr Kohl. He can do so by offering himself as the man in favour of the euro but only on condition there is no sell-out. Yet his performance may fall to convince the electorate. If the euro cannot be avoided, ask the Germans, then who do we want in charge when it happens? That is the point where the questioning be-

comes more intimate. Herr Schröder, 53, has just embarked on his fourth marriage after an adulterous affair. The media consensus was: it does not matter.

Sure enough, for voters in the Lower Saxony elections, the Prime Minister's past did not count for much. But for the country as a whole, a Schröder candidacy might come to resemble the Clinton question. Not: Can we trust him to keep the war under control? But rather: How steady will he be with our money?

The Chancellor has seized on this weakness. "Anyone can buy good public rela-

tions," he told a rally last week. "But you cannot buy character." Even so, the German leader has some convincing of his own to do. Above all, he has to show the people that he is not going to be elbowed aside by the French in the final 100 metres of the euro marathon.

Herr Kohl's message is clear: the unloved euro could not be, as the Germans want it, a crowning point of a European political union; it is simply the last bill to be paid for merging the two German states. The euro, in other words, is a backward-looking political phenomenon rather than the key to a new economic future.

Kosovo violence flares as Serbia sends in troops

SERBIA'S southern and Albanian-dominated province of Kosovo exploded into violence yesterday, with initial reports of about 20 deaths after clashes between secessionist paramilitaries and Serb police and army units.

Helicopter gunships and armoured personnel carriers were seen entering a triangle of territory controlled by a guerrilla organisation called the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK). Diplomats fear that a backlash, long threatened by President Milosevic of Yugoslavia, has begun.

After last year's anarchy in Albania, the region is awash with guns and other weaponry, and neighbouring Albanian communities in Montenegro and Macedonia could also join the struggle for autonomy. Albania itself is teetering on the brink of chaos, as armed elements loyal to Sali Berisha have made the northern highlands, the former President's homeland, a virtual no-go zone for European Union monitors and the United Nations.

Local newspapers claim there are now 45,000 army and security personnel in Kosovo, almost one for every two Serb inhabitants. Army bases near the Albanian border are on full alert. In the key strategic town of Gjakova, near the border, soldiers guard the bus station and trucks with revolving radar aerials keep in touch with border security patrols.

The violence began on Saturday when Albanians attacked a Serbian police patrol at Glagovac, a small town 20 miles west of Kosovo's capital, Pristina. Two policemen were

An Albanian attack on Serb police has given Milosevic an excuse to unleash his firepower. Tom Walker in Tirana and James Pettifer in Pristina report

killed and two seriously wounded.

Reports of what followed vary, but the Serbian police and army have been looking for an excuse to crack down on the Albanians for months, and the Democratic League for Kosovo (LDK) claims that at least 15 Albanians died and 21 were wounded in Serb reprisals in nearby villages.

Ibrahim Rugova, the LDK leader, appealed for intervention from America and the European Union to prevent further bloodshed. Last week President Clinton's special envoy, Robert Gelbard, sensing the danger of imminent chaos, denounced the UCK as a terrorist organisation, while warning President Milosevic of further sanctions in the event of a clampdown. His appeal seems to have been too little, too late. European governments, meanwhile, have scarcely managed to formulate a coherent policy on

Kosovo, distracted by President Milosevic's insistence that it is an internal Serbian affair.

For the international community, the prospect of a swath of country spanning the Yugoslav border, controlled by a loose alliance of Albanian paramilitaries and bandits, is dismal, and American officials also handed Mr Berisha a blunt warning that he must start behaving like a proper political opposition.

Mr Berisha, who wants the Socialist Government to accept fresh elections, did not appear at a rally of his Democratic Party at the weekend, and he appears to be considering his options. His supporters, meanwhile, marched through central Tirana, throwing their customary anti-communist bile at Fatos Nano, the Socialist Prime Minister. "Fatos, you got leave the country," they cried.

Although Mr Berisha has never been directly associated with the independence struggle in Kosovo, if northern Albania falls out of government control the UCK will almost certainly be able to find refuge there. Last month the Albanian army was caught in two lengthy firefights with bandits attempting to loot barracks in the town of Kukes, 30 miles southeast of Bajram Curri, and UCK involvement is suspected.



Helmut Kohl, with his wife Hannelore, evades a "Euro mouse" mascot in Wiesbaden at the weekend during a sports gala. He pledged to ensure that Germany, not rivals England, host the 2006 World Cup

Kohl challenger emerges from poll

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

THE Social Democrat, Gerhard Schröder, yesterday emerged as the politician most likely to challenge Helmut Kohl for the leadership of Germany.

Herr Schröder, the 53-year-old Prime Minister of Lower Saxony, won the regional election by a convincing majority, according to early forecasts. Exit polls by both state television channels gave his Social Democratic Party managed to re-enter the regional legislature — it needs 5 per

cent to clear the hurdle. If it succeeds, the Social Democrats may be denied an absolute majority and be forced to share power with the Greens.

But the main focus is on Bonn. Herr Schröder is the rival most feared by the Chancellor. For more than a year, Herr Schröder — who likes to compare himself with Tony Blair — has regularly outstripped Herr Kohl in national popularity polls, with 60 per cent approval ratings. The Chancellor's popularity has

been dipping well below 50 per cent.

The Social Democrats today hold an executive board meeting which is likely to put forward Herr Schröder as the favoured candidate. The decision is supposed to be rubber-stamped by a party conference on March 16. There was no comment yesterday from Herr Schröder's rival, Oskar Lafontaine, the party chairman, but they will have to end their feud if the Social Democrats are to present a united front.

At the three-day conference, which ended yesterday, die-hard supporters of Mussolini were sidelined during a slick, media-conscious event in which the predominant colour was light blue. Alessandra Mussolini, the dictator's granddaughter and Naples MP, protested in vain that there were no portraits of the Duce at the conference, and that books by and about him had been banned from the bookstall.

The Alliance even adopted a benign new symbol, the ladybird. *La Stampa* noted that the shrewd and personable Signor Fini, 46, had created the party in 1994 out of the Italian Social Movement (MSI), the neo-Fascist descendant of the Blackshirts, and in four years had moved the party so far from its Fascist roots that it was "little more than his personal vehicle".

Finì tells heirs of Fascism the party is over

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

GIANFRANCO FINI, the leader of Italy's far-right Alliance Nazionale, claimed at the weekend that the party had shed the last vestiges of its Fascist past. He told more than 2,000 delegates to rapturous applause: "We have closed our account with history."

Signor Fini told the party conference in Verona that he was renouncing the Alliance as a "modern, open, right-wing party" in which ideology had no role. He announced a programme embracing family values and privatisation.

He chose Verona for his "new beginning" despite the fact that it was where Benito Mussolini re-established his Fascist Party after being deposed in 1943, and where his son-in-law and Foreign Minister, Count Galeazzo Ciano, was shot for treason in 1944.

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Russians divided over plans to legalise the 'night butterflies'

Tsarist city looks to its past in efforts to curb prostitution, writes Richard Beeston, on a stakeout with Saratov's vice squad

THE sleepy mood at the stakeout picked up suddenly when a convoy of cars pulled up outside the dingy hotel. Although the shapes were hard to make out through the frozen window of the unmarked police van, a shock of dyed blonde hair, a flash of shiny leather boots and an assortment of cheap fur coats confirmed that the "night butterflies" had arrived for work.

"It won't be long now," said Lieutenant Andrei Demikhov, a burly policeman, whose five-man vice squad faces a Herculean task each night in trying to stem the booming trade in young women in this city on the Volga river.

With minimum fuss, the detectives moved in and began the well-rehearsed routine of apprehending

the women and their pimps, lured to the rendezvous by an undercover policeman posing as a client.

The evening's catch made a miserable spectacle. Irina, a 25-year-old former trader and a frequent visitor to the police station, stared insolently at the officers. Larissa, 24, a former nurse, sat in silence. Lena, 20, another former nurse and new to the game, looked frightened and ashamed as she dressed in a squalid hotel room

trying to keep some dignity before the gaze of the officers.

The same scene was no doubt being repeated in cities across Russia and the former Soviet Union, where the collapse of the police state, the desperate economic situation and the ignorance of many young women have led to an explosion in prostitution.

The problem is not a new one, but unlike other regions which have chosen to ignore the consequences

of the sex industry, Saratov, a liberal-minded region the size of Belgium, thinks that it may have found a solution. For the first time since the Bolshevik Revolution, it wants to legalise, control and even profit from prostitution.

"We are not living in Stalin's 1937 when we could just round up suspects and dump them 100 kilometres from the city limits," said Captain Konstantin Myznikov, one of the main supporters of the legalisation move.

The realities in Saratov are that several hundred women work each day as prostitutes, earning £15 an hour. Although two thirds of their income goes to paying off pimps, corrupt policemen and the mafia, business is booming and girls as

young as 12 have been arrested selling their bodies on the street.

Quite aside from the moral damage, it has also caused health problems of epidemic proportions: besides higher syphilis and gonorrhoea cases there are several hundred Aids cases where a few years ago there was none.

In response, the police looked to Saratov's Tsarist past, when the city boasted about 20 licensed brothels. Now they want to license and tax the prostitutes, force them to have regular medical check-ups and offer them the protection of the law rather than the mob.

While the proposal has been applauded by officials, the move has thrown together an unlikely alliance of Communists and the

Russian Orthodox Church aiming to block legalisation.

Father Vsevolod Chaplin, an Orthodox priest, said: "First and foremost, legalisation will have a terrible impact on young people, who will assume it is acceptable to sell their bodies. We should make the penalties harsher, not easier."

At the police station in Saratov, the women, after paying token fines of £8 each, are getting ready to go back on the streets and make up for lost time and money. "I only think from day to day. How to get enough money to clothe and feed my son and how to make sure my parents never find out what I am doing," said Irina. "Maybe things will get better for us, but in my life they never have."



Alessandra Mussolini: protests were ignored

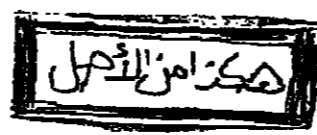
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Whose life is it anyway?

A unique fossil site has divided two eminent scientists, Simon Conway-Morris and Stephen Jay Gould. Nigel Hawkes reports

Five hundred million years ago, the oceans were populated by bizarre creatures. One had five eyes and a frontal nozzle; another, the predator *Anomalocaris*, had bulging eyes, a circular jaw and two lobster-like claws to grab its prey.

All these creatures, the products of an explosion of new life forms in the Cambrian era, are now extinct. All we know of them are contained in ghostly images imprinted in the rocks of British Columbia, at a site whose name is as resonant to biologists as the Galapagos Islands: the Burgess Shale.

Here, by some geological miracle, not only the shells and bones but also the soft parts of the creatures were preserved — even the internal organs and the food half-digested in the creatures' guts.

These wonderful fossils, a snapshot of a long-dead world, have now become the subject of a lively academic argument. On one side stands the American Stephen Jay Gould, arguably the world's best-known writer on evolution, famous for his books and lectures on the subject. On the other is Simon Conway-Morris, of Cambridge University, a quieter figure but one with commanding authority since he has spent most of his career poring over the Burgess Shale fossils.

One is a Marxist, the other a Christian; and they have profoundly different views on what the rocks tell us about life and our place in it. The Burgess Shale was discovered in 1909, after the railway was driven through the Rockies. Close to the Kicking Horse Valley, where the line makes a steep descent, the American geologist Charles Walcott stumbled on the fossils — literally, according to one story, which has it that his wife's horse trod on a rock and revealed its riches.

Professor Conway-Morris doubts the truth of this particular legend, though it is taken at face value in Stephen Jay Gould's best-selling book on the Burgess Shale.

Wonderful Life. Published to great acclaim in 1990, it won the Rhône-Poulenc science book prize. Professor Conway-Morris has now written his own book, and unlike Gould he has a first-hand knowledge of the fossils.

As a young graduate student in the 1970s he was a member of a team assembled to make a thorough examination of the Burgess Shale, and much of his career since has been taken up with a painstaking reconstruction of what the creatures of the Cambrian were really like.

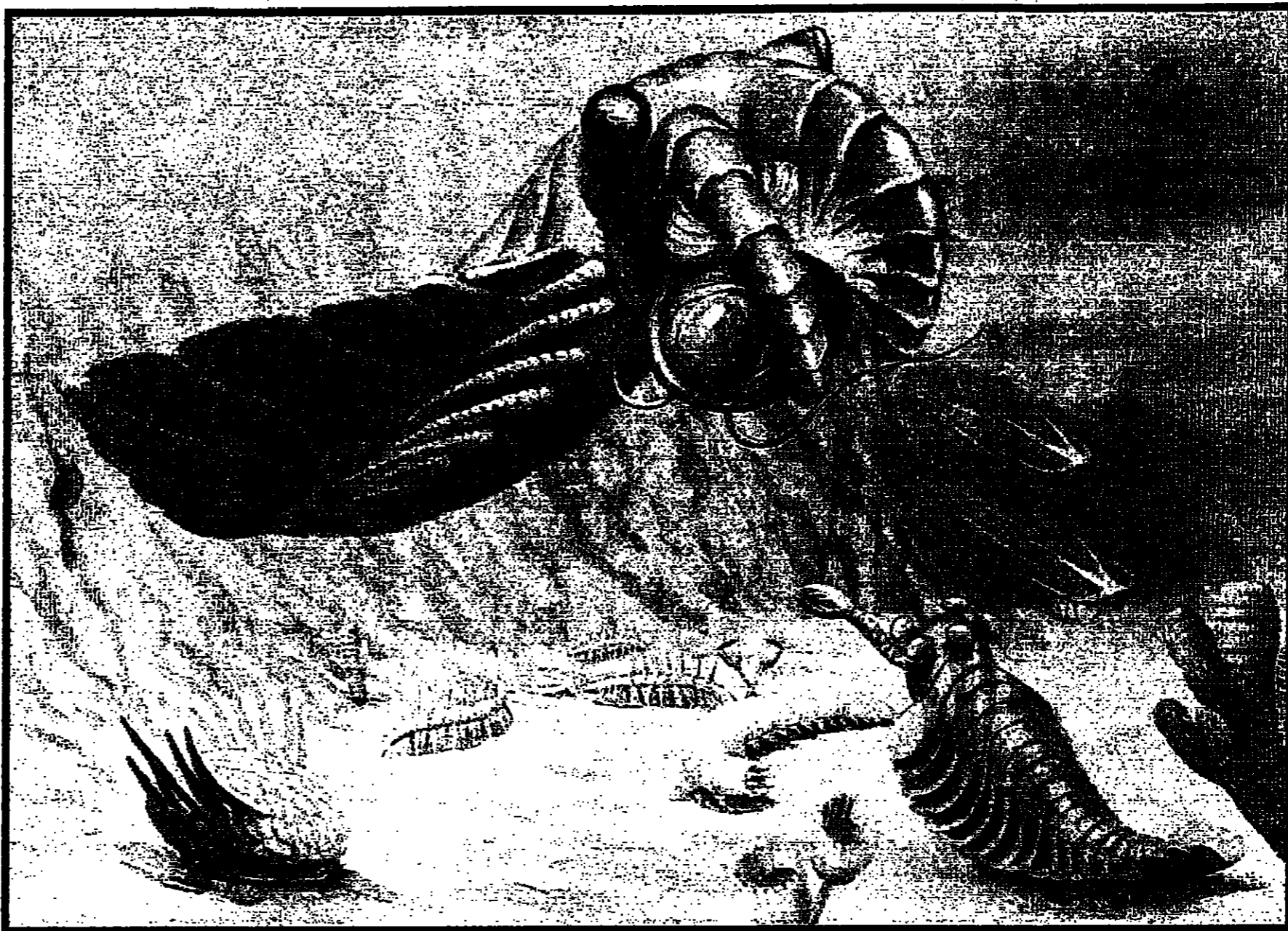
This involved not only examination of the exquisitely preserved fossils, but dissection. By removing layers of rock with tiny drills, it is possible to take the fossils apart, looking at successive layers to build up the whole picture. The team responsible, Professor Harry Whittington, Simon Conway-Morris and Derek Briggs, published their results in a series of papers and books which inspired Gould's popular account.

His book made the Burgess Shale an icon for those who study the history of life. "If the Burgess Shale did not exist, we would not be able to invent it, but we would surely pine for its discovery," wrote Gould. Conway-Morris agrees, but that is about all the two of them do agree on.

Conway-Morris's book, *The Crucible of Creation* (Oxford University Press), takes issue with Gould across a broad front. Several of the claims Gould makes in *Wonderful Life* are exaggerated, says Professor Conway-Morris, while others are either "incorrect or simply uninteresting". In the polite world of academe, this is as close to a declaration of war as you get.

The argument centres on what the Burgess Shale tells us about the evolution of life, and mankind's place in it. Gould uses the rise and fall of the species as an example of the contingent nature of evolution. Were history to be rerun, he asserts, we would end up with an utterly different world, among

whose features would almost certainly be an absence of human beings or anything like us. This is wrong, Conway-Morris asserts, because Gould has ignored the evolutionary principle known as convergence. The course of evolution throws up a huge variety of species, but it is not a constantly dividing tree. It tends rather to converge on similar forms, arriving at them through different paths, because the evolutionary pressures are the same in different places.



Burgess Shale beasts: an *Anomalocaris* (centre), and on the seabed is *Wiwaxia*, three spiny *Hallucigenia*, the worm-like *Aysheia*, and the arthropod *Opabinia*

The sabre-toothed tiger, which until recently roamed the northern hemisphere, bore an uncanny resemblance to a sabre-toothed animal that evolved in South America. But this creature was not a big cat: it was a marsupial, related to kangaroos.

This means that evolution is far more restricted than it appears. Convergence shows that in a real world, not all things are possible. This makes the emergence of intelligence not only very likely, but

almost inevitable. The tape of life can be run as many times as we like, Conway-Morris argues, and in principle intelligence will surely emerge. He believes that it has already done so twice, in man and in the octopus. Underlying the dispute there is a clash of ideologies. Conway-Morris believes that Gould, a Marxist, uses his evolutionary arguments to buttress his view of the world. "His assessment of Man as an evolutionary accident is to lead us to a

libertarian attitude whereby we, and we alone, have no choice but to take responsibility for our own destiny and mould it to our desire," he writes. Although he does not say so explicitly, Conway-Morris is a Christian. The giveaway is his use of the word transcendence — "not, I grant you, commonly found among atheists", he admits. His faith makes him impatient with the arguments used by Gould, for to him life must have meaning as well

as mechanism. His book is another example of the truth that it is impossible to study evolution without taking a view on bigger truths.

It was the dilemma that stayed Darwin's hand as he contemplated his theory of natural selection and which remains just as forceful today.
 *Times readers can buy the *Crucible of Creation* by Simon Conway-Morris for just £16.99 (a saving of £2 on the RRP of £18.99) by calling the Times Bookshop on 0990 134 459.

THE problem faced by computer programmers attempting to imitate human intelligence is that the winning post keeps moving. No sooner has IBM's program Deep Blue beaten the chess champion Garry Kasparov than a new target is set. This time the aim is to teach a computer how to write a short story — and the result, so far, is a failure. But that rather pleases the program's originator, Selmer Bringsjord of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. He believes that computers can only simulate human

The unkindest byte of all

thought, not reproduce it. Despite this, he has spent the past seven years writing a storytelling program. The aim is to provide the program, called Brutus.I, with the opening sentence of a short story, then ask it to write the rest. The parameters within which Brutus.I works are narrow: it

can only write stories based on the notion of betrayal. On the other hand, this category includes such works as *Macbeth* and *Othello*, so it has hardly been disdained by the world's great writers. Brutus.I works because Professor Bringsjord and David Ferrucci, a senior IBM

scientist, were able to come up with a mathematical representation of betrayal, and to provide the program with lots of information about the academic world — professors, theses, students, lectures and so on. The result is certainly prose, but not what most people would call a story. One version begins: "Dave Striver loved the university. He loved its ivy-covered clock-towers, its ancient and sturdy brick, and its sun-splashed verdant greens and eager youth. He also loved the fact that the university is free of the stark, unforgiving trials of the business world..." Readers unable to tear themselves away from this

Lack of love in a cold climate



David Waxman suggest that easier conditions in the south produce large numbers of woodlice, some of which attempt to migrate north. They carry genes good in the south, but less so in the north. The populations already in the north are well-adapted to the circumstances and therefore mating with the southern migrants could result in offspring that are less so. So it makes sense for the northern species to avoid the risk, and remain asexual.

SCIENTISTS at Sussex University have worked out why sex is less common in a cold climate. It has been known that some plants, insects and animals — the woodlice, for example — reproduce sexually or asexually, and populations which disdain sex tend to live in more extreme environments. But nobody has known why. Now Drs Joel Peck, Jonathan Yearsley and

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SCIENCE BRIEFING

Nigel Hawkes

place. They have found odour genes on 16 of the 23 chromosomes, and there are probably a lot more. It is estimated that at least 1,000 genes are devoted to smell. Only three are needed for colour vision. The striking thing is that about 70 per cent of the genes identified by the team are "pseudogenes" — genes that can no longer make functional proteins. This could mean that human smell was once much more acute, but declined as the genes responsible acquired mutations.

Not to be sniffed at

THE human nose can detect 10,000 different odours, but some new research suggests that it may once have been an even more formidable organ. A team led by Dr Dominique Giorgi of the National Centre for Scientific Research in Montpellier reports in *Nature Genetics* that the genes responsible for smell are distributed evenly throughout the chromosomes, instead of being concentrated in one

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Bagging status and savoir faire



Aubergine long-sleeved jersey top, £210, teamed with a black hipster belt skirt, £300, and a brown GG logo shoulder bag, £290. All these items are by Gucci, 18 Sloane St, London SW1 (0171-235 6707).



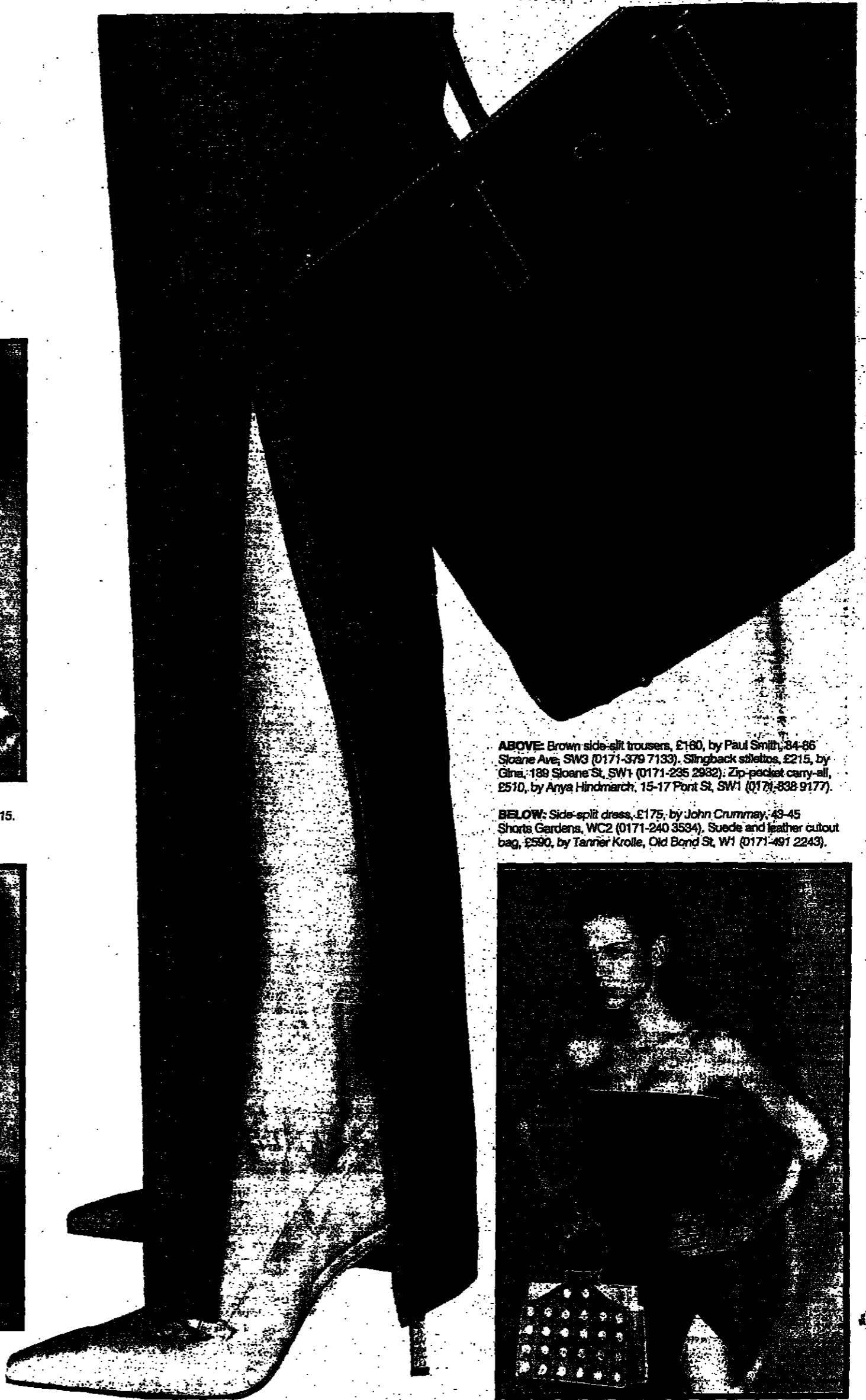
Knitted dress, £100, Plain Sud, House of Fraser (0171-963 2591). Nylon and Perspex handle bag, £315. Satin and Perspex wedge heels, £185, both by Prada, 43-45 Sloane St, SW1 (0171-235 0008).



Matte crêpe capped-sleeve T-shirt, £22, by Warehouse, 19-21 Argyle St W1 (0171-278 3491). Sequin knee skirt, £119, by Joseph, 77 Fulham Rd, SW3 (0171-590 6200). Shoulder bag, £99.95, by Karen Miller, 22/23 James Street, WC2 (0171-836 4355).



Leather and chrome bag, £145, Russell & Bromley, 24/25 New Bond St, W1 (0171-629 6903). Perspex cuff with silver chain, £125, Scott Wilson at Erickson Beamon 38 Elizabeth St, SW1.



ABOVE: Brown side-split trousers, £180, by Paul Smith, 34-86 Sloane Ave, SW3 (0171-379 7133). Side-split dress, £215, by Gina, 189 Sloane St, SW1 (0171-235 2982). Zip-pocket carry-all, £510, by Anya Hindmarch, 15-17 Port St, SW1 (0171-838 9177).

BELOW: Side-split dress, £175, by John Cunniff, 43-45 Shorta Gardens, WC2 (0171-240 3534). Suede and leather cutout bag, £590, by Tanner Krolle, Old Bond St, W1 (0171-491 2243).



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DEBENHAMS

From satin to nylon, this season's bags are bold and sculptural with geometric designs. Style Editor Grace Bradberry reports

Think of the labels that have dominated late Nineties fashion — the fashion that the young, rich and thin actually wear and buy, as opposed to the stuff that makes headlines — and two Italian labels come to mind: Gucci and Prada.

It is no coincidence that both started the decade as leather-goods companies, and that both battled their way to the top with forceful swings of their desirable handbags.

More than ever, handbags are the objects on which empires are founded. They are also, along with shoes, the items that separate the fashion aristocracy from the riff-raff (the top fashion editors are given these bags, everyone else buys them to keep up). Even beyond the catwalk, however, the right bag can create an impression of status and *savoir-faire*.

There are so many to choose from that it's impossible to give a comprehensive survey. If you are a lady-who-lunches, you may want to invest in a Chanel bag, the Lady Dior, or

one of the new Louis Vuitton bags. For evening, names such as Dolce & Gabbana, Lulu Guinness and Audrey Ang are a good bet. What most of us want, however, is a really good investment bag that will take us chichly through life's practical challenges — work, business lunches and interviews.

The trend at the moment is for sculptural bags of sturdy construction. With a strong geometric design, even a voluminous shopping bag can be an object of beauty. The Notting Hill leather designer does some great ones, as does Anya Hindmarch, who started her own business in 1987, at the age of 19. Hindmarch's two London stores stock her collection of 45 handbags, each bearing the designer's bow logo and crafted in bold, unfussy shapes.

The one shown here is a latter-day Mary Poppins bag, swallowing up remarkable quantities of junk. It has a gloss finish and contains two separate zip compartments.

Tanner Krolle is another British label, but one that has

been around for 140 years, first as a saddlery company, then as the maker of old-fashioned luggage. Last year it relaunched itself on a fashion trajectory, hoping to emulate Prada and Gucci.

With a new shop on Bond Street, and a collection of more than 200 designs, the most easily identifiable of its bags is the punch-hole design with circular nickel clasp. These bags cost a small fortune but should last a lifetime.

Though they are well-made, longevity is not really what Gucci bags are about. Still carrying last season's bamboo-handled bag? Fashion is passing you by. This season a single leather shoulder strap has replaced the bamboo — simple and classic enough to glide through high society,

even when it no longer qualifies as the "it" bag.

One thing that does look dated now is Prada's silver triangle. Once a sign of discreet luxury, the logo became so well known — and so widely faked — that it lost some of its cachet. Now it has been replaced with an even more subtle embroidered logo — but don't worry, everyone will still know that it's Prada.

This season's Prada bags come in leather, satin or the company's trademark nylon, and the most recognisable feature is the clear, curved Perspex handles.

If you can't afford to fritter a month's mortgage payment on a bag, then the high street has some convincing alternatives. Russell & Bromley does a well priced range of strong modern bags, while Karen Miller recently started making high-quality accessories.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Alex Sarginson
Stylist: Deborah Brett
Hair: Martyn Gayle using Phillip Kingsley Products
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Model: Nancy Hagen at select

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The art of erotica

Rowan Pelling is 30, an Oxford graduate, and an editor — of an erotic literary magazine. Interview by Damian Whitworth



Erotic art: a print by Jean-Frédéric Schall (1752-1825)

Those who make a habit of scanning magazine racks for the saucier sort of journal will have spotted something new to excite their interest recently. Formerly available only by mail order in a plain cover, it is a lively read. The writing is spicy, the illustrations explicit. The depictions of the inventive ways in which adults might consider pleasing themselves and each other leave little to the imagination.

According to Rowan Pelling, the editor of *The Erotic Print Society Review*, many readers of this newspaper will not be startled by such material; they are already regular buyers of her magazine. Those who have yet to examine her wares are unlikely to be able to resist taking a peek for long. Her magazine is on the up and up.

The *Erotic Print Society Review* has been a purveyor of erotic art for some four years and the *Review* was launched initially as its newsletter for regular customers, featuring a run-down of its prints and publications. Bestsellers include *The Illustrated Art of Bottoms* and *The Illustrative Art of Lynn Paula Russell*, a former porn model who now paints "sensually erotic" scenes in which she stars. "That's as rude as we get," says Rowan. So popular did the *Review*



Rowan Pelling: "There's a funny dividing line between art and pornography. We are pretty sure where it rests."

prove, it is now an expanded quarterly magazine. The winter issue is on selected newsstands and in Waterstone's bookshops, which had to re-order copies after selling out. Circulation, including mail order, is nudging 30,000.

The current issue includes a piece by Michael Horowitz on multiple orgasms in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and Amberon Waugh's recollections of the thrill of reading Petronius's *Satyricon* as an adolescent. His wish to "see a print depicting the scene in which a noblewoman calls on the services of a priapic ass is granted below the text. There are more eye-popping illustrations throughout, and a whole colour page of available prints.

Rowan, 30, worked on *Private Eye* and *GQ* after Oxford University and took on the *Review* last summer after a stint helping in the office.

"She had no background or particular interest in erotica, but says she is the least prudish person she knows. She asserts passionately, however, that her magazine is fun, not filthy. "There's this funny dividing line between art and pornography. We are pretty sure where it rests. We take stuff only from proper artists and proper writers."

"Most people are very embarrassed by the magazine and have a fondness for it. It is

reasonably upmarket, not smutty and quite funny. The British have a peculiar relationship with sex. They don't like it to be overt but if it is funny, you are likely to get away with it. We are catering for people who wouldn't buy top-shelf porn.

"We now accept that art tries to depict everything important in human experience. One of those things is sex. There shouldn't be a great problem with that. It is not as though we are displaying it on billboards."

The readers, she says, are not panting pubescent boys passing a well-thumbed copy around the schoolyard. According to Rowan, 60 per cent read either *The Times* or *The Daily Telegraph*, where the magazine is discreetly advertised.

"I know who our readers are. They are between 45 and 75. They ring up and say 'is that the [shouting] Erotic — Print — Society?' and they are very charming and not at all embarrassed. We are very discreet. We get retired col-

How I learnt to love my bald patch

David Lancaster on the advantages of a shiny dome

NINETEEN — that's when it all started. I was about to embark on three years of what I hoped would be all that was best about university when I noticed that the crown on my head had begun to spread worryingly. The skin was tending to reflect any overhead light I stood under. A gruff inquiry to my barber confirmed the worst: I was losing my hair. Drat.

Now, 13 years on, my tresses haven't disappeared completely, but I can see the future — and it's pale pink. Too much sun and it's orange. What has also changed is that I can say with hand on heart that follicular underachievement has ceased to concern me. Some of my valiner brethren refuse to believe this. I am, in their eyes, in denial and will one day wake up to the realisation that I am doomed to pipe, slippers and a cloth cap.

However, one of the advantages (yes, there are several) of losing hair early is that you become, with every passing day, more of an expert on what it means to you, the world and the opposite sex. And the truth is that nobody really cares. As all those women's magazine clichés suggest — the ones which men often don't believe — what really matters in the attractiveness stakes are humour, confidence, appreciation of the female sex, humour, ability to laugh at oneself, humour again, bit of money, a future, etc. etc. Oh, and nice buttocks, apparently.



Cheeky: Andre Agassi

Dome "experience". I know what's inside mine, and unlike Peter Mandelson, I didn't have to go to Disneyland for ideas.

Not that our American cousins don't have some bright ones. They are the experts on the final solution to baldness. A couple of years ago there was a solution which you rubbed on: last month they isolated the gene which causes male baldness, and now there is a pill which seems to do the job, but runs a small (2 per cent) risk of impotency in the taker. My worry is that baldness will, very soon, be as absent from the American middle and upper classes as slightly uneven teeth or laughter lines are now.

A greater worry, though, is that the 2 per cent who do find that the hair is suddenly there, but very little else of use is, will be happy with their Faustian pact. Good luck to them. On the evidence of my wide and varied consultations on the subject with men and women, they'll need it, as they will have everything in order upstairs but nothing downstairs.

THERE will always, of course, be some women who can only feel affection, involvement or enthusiasm for men with the hair of a ten-year-old. But they can keep Paul Gascoigne, Leo Sayer, Noel Edmonds... or Jeremy Beadle, Michael Winner, Nigel Mansell and the one from the Three Stooges with an early Beatles cut. Grass, as truly discriminating women know, does not grow on a busy street. And for every woman who goes for the kiddie vote above, there will always be those who prefer a hewn-from-solid Sean Connery, a lithe Yul Brynner or a cheeky Andre Agassi.

The second question that other chaps ask — once they have realised that in looking at me they are looking at their own futures — is what sort of haircut most suits those with less to play with. For a while I thought the Jack Nicholson comb-back would put off the inevitable. But Jack, though a baldie to admire for his nonchalant swagger in the face of

THE ARTS

We are amused: after a 15-year, £11 million facelift, the Albert Memorial is set to emerge from its scaffolding — P18-19

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Further development of the magazine, with proper nationwide distribution and selected advertising is planned. Rowan is in talks with possible financial backers. But she stresses that the *Review* does not have to expand and there is no urgency to do so. "We don't want it to become something we don't like."

She believes that her magazine harks back to gentler times. Some of what it depicts actually looks quite rough, but you take her point. "People look at all this sex, sex, sex on television and hate it being written like that — magazines shouting things at you. They want something a bit more veiled. Something to laugh at behind closed doors."

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This week in THE TIMES



CLASSICAL Christoph von Dohnanyi and the PO explore Bartok in the Festival Hall CONCERT: Tomorrow REVIEW: Thursday



DANCE Sample the sensual spirit of Cuba: Club Tropicana spices up the Albert Hall OPENS: Wednesday REVIEW: Friday



FILM Matt Damon is the misfit genius in the feel-good movie Good Will Hunting RELEASED: Friday REVIEW: Thursday



THEATRE Tennessee Williams's Not About Nightingales premieres at the National OPENS: Thursday REVIEW: Saturday PLUS: Cornershop plays the Corn Exchange, Cambridge, on Tuesday

Sorry exodus of greatness

Although the slump in Genesis's fortunes was entirely predictable, the sheer scale of their downfall has been breathtaking. Hanging around for six years between studio albums...

POP Genesis Earls Court

Domino, jungles during Congo, but none of the staging was sufficiently involving or spectacular to command attention for its own sake.

Clearly more comfortable with songs from the new album, Calling All Stations, Wilson gradually settled into the task with increasingly confident versions of the title track and There Must Be Some Other Way.

DAVID SINCLAIR

The good and the ugly

Ich bin dein is engraved on the heart-shaped locket given by a father to his favourite daughter in Judith Thompson's play.



Such devoted sisters: Kerry Fox (Mercy) and Geraldine Somerville (Dee) in Judith Thompson's intriguing play

I Am Yours Ambassadors

her way back across Canada to visit her sister, at a time when what Dee calls "the animal" shows every sign of bursting out from inside her.

Well, the thing to do is wait and see, and sure enough Toilane brings the animal out. Mercy's dreams help to explain her mottomouth adulthood, and we can pick for ourselves some causes for Dee's zigzag walk along the borderline of sanity.

Most of the characters have been seriously skewed by childhood, and their interactions create another of the alarming portraits of Canadian metropolitan life in which Thompson and her fellow playwrights specialise.

Nigel Charnock comes for you in stockings, high heels, blue bottle sunglasses and a dark wig. There is a microphone stuck to his right cheekbone.

listening at the wall, the deadly danger of a swarm of bees behind the plaster.

Not a dry seat in the house of curiosities... is Charnock laying out his sociopathic credentials. A comic rant about sex tapers into an awkward stilted story about how his father missed being put on the train to Auschwitz.

At the eventual birth, all but onstage, note how simply Baron draws our attention to a penknife. Disagreeable people but an intriguing drama.

sky into a spotlight. Perhaps a yen for a "normal" relationship, you speculate, after he has delivered a glittering and grim ode to the daily grind of male intimacy.

Strong stuff

Mstislav Rostropovich was solemn and ashen-faced after he had conducted the last note of the final, seemingly infinite pianissimo of Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony.

CONCERT LSO Rostropovich Barbican

Before their performance of Shostakovich's First Piano Concerto, with Mikhail Rudy and Rod Franks, trumpet, the London Symphony Orchestra and Rostropovich had started this third concert in their revelatory Shostakovich series with the Five Fragments.

Shostakovich started thinking about the work in 1934; in 1935 he destroyed every sketch, every draft. Shortly after this, the composer suffered the vilification and persecution associated with his Lady Macbeth opera.

HILARY FINCH

Grid of theatre listings including Opera & Ballet, Theatres, Comedy, and Dance sections with various show titles and venue information.

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Handwritten signature and notes at the bottom right of the page.

One arts programme at a time, please



MELVYN BRAGG

Last week there was a Small Earthquake in Telly. Nobody much hurt — except, possibly, those viewers who like and rely on arts programmes. Peter Salmon, the lively new Controller of BBC1 and a recent import from ITV, has put an end to the gentleman's agreement which has lasted for about 30 years that arts programmes on the big channels were rare enough anyway, should not be scheduled head-to-head.

This new BBC policy is rather a shame. Certainly, I believe, had it happened when John Birt was Controller of Programmes at BBC1, he would have been outraged and argued that this is not the way in which a public service licence fee channel should behave.

Of course, most people might think that this is a small matter. So is spit in your eye. To me, arts programmes are an essential part of the broadcast agenda of British broadcasting and it is important for viewers that such material is available to the widest possible public. The two big channels offer

that, in fact, it is still something of a miracle in this country that such programmes are on our two most popular channels at all.

Because of the lack of formal education, or money, or the drawbacks of geography, or private fears, there are many people who find on BBC1 and ITV their first, best and often only taste of the arts. Over the years many talented programme-makers have constructed programmes available to this wide audience, programmes which are also admired by practitioners in the arts world itself.

As it happened, on the first head-to-head scheduling the other Sunday — *The South Bank Show* about Beryl Bainbridge, against the *Omnibus* about the film-maker Jim Sheridan — TSBS finished in front by a nose. It could easily have gone the other way. The important thing is that more

than three million people watched both programmes — so how many more would have watched Sheridan or Bainbridge had BBC1 decided not to shift its cultural tank on to turf which it knows has been occupied by an ITV arts programme for 20 seasons?

Like everyone in the arts, one's aim is to maximise the audience. If the BBC wants head-to-head competition, we will go for it. In my view it will be silly and pointless, but it will become a contest, and the losers will be the viewers.

Why this sudden lurch? Well, a possibly baseless rumour comes from the BBC that already the new BBC1 has decided that subjects which do not attract large audiences need not apply for slots on *Omnibus*. If so, what a pity, especially from an organisation which set the benchmark for arts programmes with *Monitor*. And

fraction even of the "minority" of the arts audience out there. I do that because it is worth doing and it is important that viewers get the chance to see them — programmes, over the past few months, such as those on Paul Auster, or the first four short films of new young British directors, or John Adams. To be making only pop arts programmes betrays what, in our admittedly marginal television seam, could be called a great tradition.

Why on earth does the BBC want to do this? I am a fully paid-up supporter of and enthusiast for the BBC. Where I know it in detail — from my work for Radio 4 — I find it dedicated, serious, Reithian and alert to contemporary imperatives. On the *Rialto*, of course, the air is full of strange rumours, out of which one thing emerges clearly: the BBC needs its core friends.

It needs the old friends, such as those of us in ITV who supported it not many years ago, when it was near panic-stricken by fears of Margaret Thatcher's intentions for its future. Bad times tend to come around again. The BBC is operating on the widest front ever in its 75-year history and taking big risks. Why mess with arts audiences?

Am I saying that arts programmes on the two popular channels should be protected? Yes. *The South Bank Show* offers 22 editions a year, *Omnibus* almost as many. If these cannot be separated and presented to viewers with care for well-known viewing habits then we are in a bad way.

I cannot expect everyone to be as proselytising or committed about arts programmes as I am, but I'm

sure that Kim Evans, head of arts and music at the BBC, and Gillian Greenwood, editor of *Omnibus*, are of the same mind as myself.

You could, of course, say why not watch one and record the other? A perfectly sensible and largely useless suggestion. That is not the reality for most people and broadcasters know it. Besides, the BBC knows and argues better than anyone that the mass watching of a programme on transmission is an essential element in the culture of a national accountable broadcasting system.

For many readers I will seem to have made too much of this Small Earthquake in Telly. Not many hurt, after all. Except possibly those few million viewers who love and follow their arts programmes. And the subjects of those largely well-made films, the artists, who in my view deserve as big a shout as we can possibly give them in programmes transmitted to an audience waiting to be "informed, educated and entertained", as the founder of the BBC put it.

Unwrapping the giant's confection

ARCHITECTURE: After 15 years, the Albert Memorial is ready to face its public again. Marcus Binney reports

It has been clad in scaffolding so long that people have forgotten what it looks like, but in May the wraps will start to come off the Albert Memorial, readying it for a royal opening in November. "We're a year ahead of schedule and well under budget," says jubilant Sir Jocelyn Stevens, the chairman of English Heritage. Final costs are likely to be £11.5 million, rather than the forecast £14 million.

The project is a triumph for the Victorian Society, which campaigned for restoration, and for Stevens, who persuaded the then Heritage Minister Peter Brooke to put up £8 million for repairs. If English Heritage would raise the remaining £3 million. Back in the 1980s there were acute fears that the monument was in danger of collapse. "The ministry even had a plan for pulling it down," says Stevens. Gilbert Scott's structure has been a test of taste ever since it was built. One courier compared it to "a confection of gingerbread which ought to be under a glass shade on a giant's mantelpiece". There is more than a grain of truth in this, for Scott's whole concept was based on the tabernacles found on medieval altars. His aim was to realise the "architectural designs furnished by the Middle Ages, those exquisite productions of the goldsmith and the jeweller".

For years, the Albert Memorial was a joke. Gavin Stamp points out that "by 1872 Scott was fair game. If you wanted to have a go at architects and didn't like the Gothic Revival, you had a go at poor old Scott." Crisis broke in 1983 when a large piece of lead cornice was found lying on the memorial's steps. The public was at risk and scaffolding was hastily

erected. The crux of it was that the memorial had never been properly maintained. By the time the gilded statue of the Prince Consort was in place, the white marble of the podium frieze was already streaked and stained. Worse, the roof was not watertight and, as the inner iron structure rusted, it expanded, causing further cracks. For the first few years the canopy over Albert acted like a cistern, with rusty water seeping out over

oversen the restoration. In future, English Heritage will give the monument an annual close-quarters inspection.

When initial tests suggested cleaning could damage the glass jewels on the spire, English Heritage resorted to laser cleaners which heat up the dirt without affecting the surface underneath so it simply peels away. But what was dark was not all dirt. "Bits of the ornamental lead were deliberately blackened to create contrast," Glass says.

For the figure of Albert, not to be unwrapped until November, there is a double coating of protective gold leaf — 675 twenty-page books of 24-carat gold leaf. Extravagant? The cost — £50,000 — is rather less than some of Lord Irvine of Lairg's wallpaper. "We have not set out to restore the memorial as new, but to the moment before degeneration set in," Stevens says. There has been little stone renewal and no attempt to replace every missing part.

Now the memorial is restored there is a fascinating story to be told of its design and construction, not to mention the 169 figures of the world's greatest artists, architects and poets in the Parnassus frieze (Scott, included at the insistence of Queen Victoria, was the only living practitioner — he placed himself modestly behind Pugin).

English Heritage had an ingenious plan to excavate an exhibition gallery beneath the memorial steps where Scott's superb model could have been displayed. A modest entrance fee would have paid for a full-time custodian on site, a useful deterrent to vandalism. Better still, it would have allowed the public entrance to the remarkable undercroft supporting the

statue. The models had been bedded in a mortar which swelled when wet, so pieces constantly popped off.

"In the First World War they panicked, thinking the glint of gold in the moonlight would prove a landmark to Zeppelins," Stevens says. A bodged attempt was made to retrieve the gold as it came off, leaving a sticky mess that had to be hastily disposed of. In the Second World War friendly fire from anti-aircraft guns in Hyde Park took off the orb at the top. When put back after 1945, it was turned round 90 degrees. No one thought it was worth the effort to put it right.

While the memorial has been under wraps, the rainwater disposal system has been overhauled. "Every pipe and gully now feeds into two, so water can never be trapped," says Alisdair Glass, who has

‘We’re a year ahead of schedule and £2.5m under budget’



Brian Bowen, the site manager, with the mosaic, *Poetry*. The memorial has not been restored as new, but to the moment before degeneration set in

moment. "It's like the souk at Aleppo: as long as you keep going down you find your way out," Glass says. Lamentably, the Heritage Lottery Fund refused a grant.

Ridicule has always been a powerful tool and, when the scaffolding comes down, the test is whether we can set aside the gibes of more than a century and look at the memorial with fresh eyes. Stevens' greatest ally will be the telephoto lens which will ensure that the sumptuous richness of the newly cleaned and gilded detail is endlessly recorded in colour close-up.

"Restoration shows what a gloriously extrovert style of architecture this was," Stevens says. The great change will be the gold leaf. Before, the angels on top of the memorial and the rich cresting of foliage running up the gables were a pleasant but pale copper-green. They will emerge in lustrous, luminous gold.

The faithful few

GOSPEL

THE voices are first-rate: all they need now is a full house. As no other style depends on audience participation quite as much as gospel music, it was disappointing to see so many empty seats in the Hackney Empire stalls at this stage in the Harlem Gospel Singers' three-week season.

Perhaps the ticket prices should be reassessed: £13 seems a lot to pay for the cheapest seat in a venue which is, incoming yuppies and media trends notwithstanding, still a deprived area.

This is, remarkably enough, the first time the Harlem Gospel Singers — led by Queen Esther Marrow, a latterday Mahalia Jackson with extensive roots in jazz and pop — have toured this country.

In spite of the slick, Vegas-style trimmings, they provide a thoroughly inspiring survey of gospel history, from glori-

ous a cappella spirituals reminiscent of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, through to the more dubious attractions of today's "inspirational" music, a sanitised form which racks up enormous sales in the States without the help of anything approaching a memorable melody.

Apart from the addition of a few numbers, including Bill Withers' elegiac *Grandma's Hands*, this performance was almost identical to the concert the group gave in Berlin a few weeks ago. Yet the singers and their excellent six-piece band do not allow the demands of professionalism to dampen the sanctified spirit.

Marrow, a commanding singer with a stately presence to match the name with which she was born, allowed her "babies" plenty of opportunities to shine. The diminutive but potent Minty Berry once again stole the show with her high-kicking routine.

You can go all go-faced over pianist Anthony Evans's shamelessly over-the-top rock'n'roll solo spot, but he is only following a trail pioneered by preachers-cum-entertainers from Sister Rosetta Tharpe to Little Richard.

CLIVE DAVIS

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The peace train about to arrive

Martin Fletcher surveys the last, perilous miles to a settlement

In the half-year since it set off, Northern Ireland's peace train has lurched from crisis to crisis. It has been rocked by bombs, murders and acts of sabotage. Its leading passengers have yanked the communication cord, pushed each other off, and barricaded their carriages with historical baggage. All of this has been so well chronicled that it is easy to overlook a simple fact. Against all odds, and despite its awesome load, the train continues to inch towards its destination.

The violence has been largely perpetrated by extreme splinter groups — the Continuity IRA (CIRA), the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) — which never supported peace talks in the first place. The main loyalist and republican paramilitary organisations have intermittently retaliated, but perhaps the real surprise is the extent to which their ceasefires have held — so far — despite extreme provocation.

In six months of reporting from Belfast I have learnt a few lessons about this murky place. Never make firm predictions. There are no hard facts, only endless theories and suppositions. Distrust anyone who claims inside knowledge of the hugely secretive paramilitary organisations and their political wings. Despite all of this, it now seems just possible that an historic accommodation can be achieved and that all but the most committed men of violence realise they will not have a chance like this again.

The really perilous part of the journey is only just beginning, however. The British and Irish Governments are determined to secure a deal by Easter, and to hold referendums north and south of the border in May before the marching season inflames sectarian passions. They are trying to build a head of steam, but as the train nears its destination the attempts to derail it are likely to become more frequent and ferocious.

The five big bombs planted by CIRA since last autumn have not killed anybody, but one bloodbath over the next six weeks could shatter the loyalist ceasefire. INLA may seek the same result by targeting a top loyalist. The LVF will doubtless seek to goad the IRA with further atrocities. CIRA's bombs also add to the already considerable strain on the IRA's ceasefire by fuelling the dissatisfaction of restive IRA hardliners.

Against this likely background of escalating violence, Northern Ireland's political leaders will have to take some of the toughest decisions of their careers. For most of the past six months they have done little more than set out their stalls. The only genuine progress has come as a result of government intervention. That has produced the broad parameters of an agreement, but the parties themselves must make the final choices.

David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist Party leader, has the chance to strengthen the

Union and become the Province's Prime Minister, but only by offering concessions to nationalists that would draw cries of betrayal from Ian Paisley, the UK Unionist Party leader Robert McCartney, and possibly some of his own MPs. He has played his hand skilfully, and with courage, but his freedom of manoeuvre is limited.

John Hume's nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party can win material gains for its constituents — power-sharing, new links with the Republic, stronger rights and safeguards — but only by endorsing an essentially nationalist settlement.

While officials at the talks are convinced that the UUP and SDLP — which never supported peace talks in the first place. The main loyalist and republican paramilitary organisations have intermittently retaliated, but perhaps the real surprise is the extent to which their ceasefires have held — so far — despite extreme provocation.

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Some disgruntled hardliners have covertly aided CIRA, others have set up the 32 County Sovereignty Committee, and this month's Army Council review of the ceasefire has everyone worried.

Could the Sinn Fein leadership buy, let alone sell to its followers, a deal that included a new northern assembly and Dublin ending its territorial claim to the North in return for greater Northern South co-operation and a few immediate gains in fields such as policing, justice and equality? If not, would it abstain, or vote against? Would it stick to constitutional politics, and striving to overtake the SDLP by accusing it of selling out, or revert to violence? Nobody knows.

It is just possible to envisage the bizarre situation of a northern referendum in which Sinn Fein made common cause with Mr Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, the UKUP and other Unionist dissidents to defeat a deal championed by the equally unlikely alliance of the UUP and SDLP.

Even successful referendums would not guarantee an end to conflict, of course. The first all-Ireland vote since 1918 would remove any possible justification for republican violence, but the Province's hard men would not meekly lay down their guns. Sectarian hatred as deep as that of Northern Ireland cannot be simply legislated away.

The new structures would offer the potential for lasting peace, but only if the politicians were determined to make them work. That would require a willingness to forgive and reach out that few have displayed so far. Mr Trimble and Mr Adams still do not talk, even when they are standing side by side in the

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The ageing populations of Europe and America can draw little comfort from Asia's economic woes

Our future still looks grey in the West

After these crises — in Britain in 1850, Germany in 1900, the United States in 1950 — economies usually recover exceptionally well. Slowly, but they do. The Asian crisis has not been as hard hit as Korea, Thailand or Malaysia, let alone Indonesia, but it has been under pressure, and is a nerve centre for information about the whole region.

Before the Asian devaluations, which Hong Kong itself has avoided, I was one of those who argued that the Asian economies were the real challenge to Europe and the United States, and they had a lot to teach us. The Asian countries had faster economic growth, higher savings, lower unemployment, lower public expenditure and benefited from importing the new technologies. Since the original Thai devaluation of last July, that favourable view has become unfashionable, particularly in Europe.

In itself, a financial collapse, even as serious as that in Asia, does not necessarily mean the end of a period of rapid industrial growth. Financial crises, including the present one, are the consequence of debt liquidation after periods of overinvestment. Not surprisingly, the most rapidly growing economies are most vulnerable to overinvestment. Britain in the late 1830s, Germany in the 1870s, the United States in the 1930s, Japan after 1989, the Asian "tigers" after 1997, are all examples. It is not surprising that the crises of overinvestment should occur in economies which are moving ahead strongly, rather than in weak ones.

Indeed, the causes of Europe's decline are fundamental. European countries still have a higher standard of living than most countries in Asia, but it is based on the same global technologies. Japan was the first Asian country to catch up with European and most American technology; in some technologies Japan is now ahead. Japanese investment in Asia has spread these advanced technologies: Korean cars are made by Japanese methods and to Japanese standards. Over time, the same productive base will naturally provide only the same standard of living.

Europe has another handicap compared with most of Asia — its rapidly ageing population. Nicholas Eberstadt, the American commentator, has published an article in the *Journal of Public Interest* which summarises some of the latest demographic forecasts; his article is headed "World Population Implosion".

and it makes sombre reading for Europeans. The main countries of the European Union all have fertility rates below the replacement level and therefore have ageing populations, as does Japan. In Germany and Japan, the median age is only just under 40, and rising.

That is alarming enough, but the projected trends are even more disturbing, though much less certain. On the United Nations Population Division's "low variant" projection, the more developed regions of the world — including the European Union — will have naturally falling populations as early as the year 2000. Modest net immigration will postpone an actual decrease until after 2005. Because these dates are now so close, the forecasts are reliable; there is not likely to be a magic increase in European birthrates in the next two years.

An actual decrease (more deaths than births) is likely to occur in the less developed world only 50 or more years later, because that time is so far away, that forecast is far less reliable. In the next 50 years, the ratio of population size between the more and less developed countries of the world is expected to change. By 2050 there will be no European country, including Russia, among the ten countries with the greatest population. In 1950 there were five, and there are still two at present.

The age projections give the most alarming forecasts. In Europe the net reproductive rate is only about 0.7, which means that the next generation is likely to be 30 per cent smaller than the present one. The UN makes the assumption that this low net reproduction rate will continue unchanged in the first half of the next century. If that assumption proves correct, the median age in the EU will rise to about 50, the "average" German will be 55 years old, the "average" Italian will be 58.

No country has ever tried to run a society on that basis. The overload of pensioners will not be economically sustainable. There will be an acute shortage of people of working age. The whole European economy will contract. There will presumably be a rise in immigration, particularly from Africa, whose population will still be growing quite rapidly. The population of Nigeria in 2050 is likely to be larger than that of the present EU countries, though in 1997 it was less than a third of the EU's size.

The challenge of Asian industrial growth is reinforced by this prospect of Europe's population decline. The EU has a picture of itself which is

very complacent. It sees itself as belonging to the high technology, developed world; it sees itself as enjoying an exceptionally high standard of living; it sees itself as a major world power. There is an element of truth in all of these views, as things stand now. Unfortunately Europe is quite rapidly losing share both of world production and population. Europe has not challenged the technological lead of the United States, which has actually grown over the past 50 years.

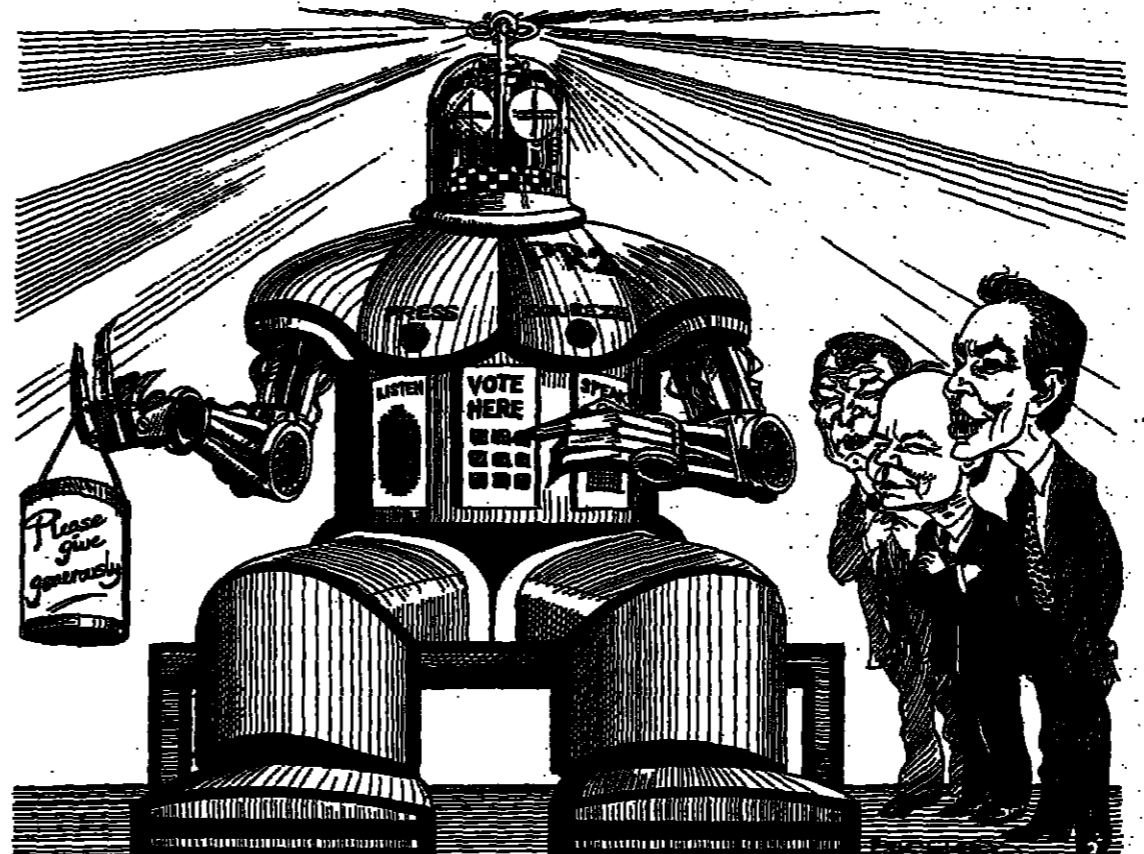
The population implosion will not, however, be confined to Europe; it is likely to be true throughout the advanced world. Russia, Japan and the United States are suffering from it as well as Europe. Perhaps the political pressures will result in new pro-life policies; abortions account for almost all the European shortfall of births below the replacement level, and that is true of most of the highly developed countries. No doubt the present highly developed countries will huddle together as they become relatively smaller and weaker. Probably there will be a trade and defence pact covering the northern hemisphere, including America, Europe, Russia and Japan, long before 2050. No doubt there will be more immigration to level up the numbers, particularly from Africa to Europe and from South to North America.

I am going to Hong Kong to see how my friends there are coping with the financial problems, which could last for years. I am temporarily leaving a Europe which has no willingness to face up to the issues of decline. What has happened in Asia, with the possible exception of Indonesia, is a second-order problem. If a difficult one. What is happening in Europe is one of the great first-order problems of history, the problem of a continent in relative decline.

William Rees-Mogg

Political cheques and balances

Reform of party funding is fraught with problems, says Peter Riddell



Lord Neill of Bladen is, as a former Warden of All Souls, by definition a very clever chap. He will need to be, since he and his Committee on Standards in Public Life have been given the near-impossible task of redesigning the British party system. Their formal remit is to examine party funding. But the submissions of the main parties show that the committee will, in practice, have to take decisions about the role of parties and conduct of elections.

The long-familiar model of two big class-based parties is fast disappearing. The Tories' donations from public companies have fallen sharply in the past decade, while only two fifths of Labour's income of £24 million last year came from the unions. Instead, parties compete for the support of voters and donors who are less partisan and committed. They increasingly rely on big donations from wealthy individuals keen to keep close ties to whoever is in power. Bernie Ecclestone was not alone among new donors to Labour in having previously given to the Tories. The proportion of Labour's income from individuals and companies doubled to 55 per cent between 1992 and 1997.

This new, market-based model has made a mockery of election law still largely based on an 1835 Act which put limits on what candidates can spend in individual constituencies, but no limits on national spending. Moreover, while public companies and unions have to disclose donations, individuals do not, creating fears of money for favours.

The legal structure is changing. Current Bills on Scottish and Welsh devolution and elections to the Euro-

pean Parliament require the registration of parties for the first time, while the Home Secretary will be able to issue regulations limiting the national spending of parties in Euro-elections.

However, limits on local spending have been challenged in a key ruling by the European Court of Human Rights ten days ago. Phyllis Bowman, of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child, had been prosecuted for spending £10,000 on distributing leaflets in a single constituency. The current limit on such spending by non-candidates is £5, which the court ruled infringed her rights to freedom of expression.

The ruling, in theory, allows pressure groups and third parties to spend heavily for or against a candidate without the money counting against the latter's tight spending

limits. In America, vast amounts are spent in congressional races by single-issue pressure groups. No wonder electoral administrators have been so alarmed. The main parties believe the ruling does not bar all limits, merely the £5 figure. So a higher limit on pressure-group spending may be possible.

The new committee may want to recommend a patchwork of solutions in answer to these problems. But I believe it should be cautious. The committee needs to distinguish between ensuring that the funding of parties is transparent, without any suspicion of influence-peddling and trying to engineer an equality of outcome. There is a case, as the Tories and Labour both suggest, for

increasing the so-called "Short" money from taxpayers to help the parliamentary and policy work of parties, but not for help for campaigning.

There is anyway little evidence that variations in levels of national spending have made much difference to results. The Tories did not win in the 1980s because they spent more, but because Labour was in a shambles. The Tories spent a record amount last year for their worst result since the franchise was extended in the last century.

Overseas experience, which the committee has been studying for the past month, has shown the problems both of state funding and of over-detailed regulation. State funding risks ossifying existing structures and discouraging parties from broadening their membership base, while

the post-Watergate restrictions on political funding in the United States have been completely undermined by widespread evasion.

Nevertheless, the current legal framework obviously needs reforming. It is no longer possible to regard parties as voluntary bodies. The Ecclestone affair destroyed the claim that the size of a donation does not matter. The main focus should be on disclosure. Moreover, it is not enough just to require parties to identify the scale and source of donations of £1,000 or more in a year. The same rules on openness should apply to all other bodies seeking to influence elections, to blind trusts helping politicians, and to help in kind from unions and the like.

I am more sceptical about attempts to cap campaign spending as long as there is full disclosure. Labour's proposal to limit permitted election expenses by parties to £15 million, with third parties permitted 10 per cent of that limit, would encourage unions and other bodies to switch spending into such routes, defeating the basic aim. More important are controls on where money can be spent, and all three parties want to keep the ban on political advertising on television and radio.

If we are inevitably moving to a more formal party structure, there is an urgent need for an independent electoral commission (as backed by Labour and the Liberal Democrats) to supervise funding, as well as the allocation of broadcasting time, boundary reviews and the broader conduct of elections. Such a commission could ensure that new rules are enforced flexibly and problems sorted out quickly. (I could have written a whole column on the problems of handling foreign donations.)

The Neill committee should resist the temptation to recommend how parties should raise their funds. Its aim should be to ensure that in a world where parties have to compete in new ways for money, they do not engage in hidden deals or compromise their independence. The real danger is not of parties buying elections but of donors buying favours.

Duff info

JOHN JULIUS NORWICH, the writer and broadcaster, is looking to publish his account of why Duff Cooper, his father, wrote a book disclosing wartime operations by the security services. The tome engendered what some have judged to be a death threat against Cooper from the security services, but also inspired a spy movie that has enthralled generations of schoolboys. Viscount Norwich wants to reissue *Operation Heartbreak* with a new explanatory introduction which he says aims to soothe "continued family sensitivity".

Cooper had been a member of Winston Churchill's War Cabinet and a British Ambassador to Paris. He told what was supposed to be a fictional account of how the British dumped a corpse bearing a false identity and fictitious military plans off the coast of Spain in 1943 to confuse the Germans. The tale, made into the film *The Man Who Never Was*, bore obvious similarities to Operation Mincemeat, a real-life wheeze.

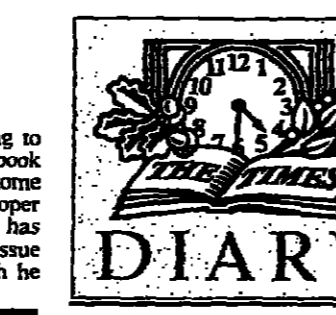
After publication in 1950, Cooper was warned "never to set foot in Britain again". Rupert Allason, the former Conservative MP who publishes spy books under the name of Nigel West, has researched the affair. "MIS told Cooper not to come back from France," says Allason. "The secret services were absolutely beside themselves with rage that a politician in charge of



Allason and wartime spooks

maintaining security had disclosed the details. "Some conspiracy theorists interpret the warning as a death threat, but I cannot believe our brave defenders of the State would behave so wildly.

ROBERT DE NIRO'S run-in with les flics investigating a prostitution ring in Paris has failed to inspire forgiveness from the Pope. Apparently, the actor had been asked to read poems written by the



Bishop of Rome for an American version of a CD. But now the invitation has been withdrawn, according to Variety magazine. "The image we had of De Niro when we made the proposal is far from the truth," says a large printout. Obviously, the actor's portrayals of psychopathic hoodlums had not offended His Holiness.

Off line

EXCALIBUR, the super-computer used by Messieurs Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell up to the election to fell Conservatives and afterwards to undermine their Labour colleagues, looks likely to be unbugged. The mainstay of the £2 million rebuttal unit at Labour's communications nerve centre at Millbank is threatened by an un-

foreseen outcome of the Government's own expressed desire for greater openness. While the computer has been used so effectively to dig the dirt on Tony Blair's opponents (you know the types, Ken Livingstone, Clare Short), it will become a victim of the anti-snooping clauses in the Data Protection Bill.

The proposals, expected to become law in the autumn, would force Millbank operatives to write to MPs to ask for permission before gathering information, which would defeat the object. I hope the demise of Excalibur does not signal the same end for Blair as it did for King Arthur.

NO ONE can say John Bercow, the Conservative MP for Buckingham, lacks enthusiasm in defending taxpayers' money; he has tabled 60 written parliamentary questions about ministerial spending. One query he has not raised, however, is the cost of civil servants finding out the answers. This, I gather, has now reached £6,000.

Stroll on!

JANET STREET-PORTER'S creative urges are becoming ever more rambling. The broadcaster and wannabe fashion icon is walking

from her home in Clerkenwell, London, to her home in North Yorkshire via paths running beside waterways. So far she has reached Leicester, but once the venture is complete she hopes to pen a follow-up to her *Coast to Coast*, which accompanies her BBC television series and is out next week.

Her worst experience happened, perhaps unsurprisingly, in Watford. "I stubbed my toe," she says. "I couldn't walk for a week." I suspect Alfred Watnwright's mantle remains secure.

DAY-TRIPPERS planning to smuggle tobacco into Britain would be advised not to purchase it



at the warehouse in Adinkke, Belgium. Jacqui Latt, the Conservative MP, will be visiting the emporium later this month and, well, loitering. "If I see anyone buying more tobacco than they could possibly consume themselves, I'll ask them if they intend it for private consumption," she says. "If the answer is no, I might feel inclined to alert Customs."

Out-foxed

KATE HOEY has come out as a strong supporter of yesterday's green welfies brigade, including voting against the anti-hunting Bill last November. But, I can disclose, the delightful MP for urban Vauxhall was not always so inclined. Copies of letters she wrote between 1992 and 1996 strongly supporting the introduction of anti-hunting measures have landed upon my desk. One typical missive reads: "Please be assured that I will actively support all moves in Parliament to ban hunting and to improve animal welfare generally." Is this what Blair means by Labour flexibility?

TABITHA TROUGHTON, the hip young author of *Animals*, has upset the good folk of Aylesbury. They are scandalised by the novel's



Animal passions: Tabitha

depiction of themselves as drug dealers, transsexuals, flashers and people with strong affinities with geese. David Lidington, the local Conservative MP, told me: "If people take a gander at Aylesbury after reading this they will be extremely disappointed but also pleasantly surprised. Mind you, I would have thought the natives would by now have been used to being the butt of artistic colour: the town was the setting for Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*."

EDWARD WELSH

Handwritten notes and signatures at the bottom right of the page.



A COUNTRY BALANCE

Ministers should not treat every marcher's complaint equally

The breadth of support the Countryside March enjoyed yesterday was a tribute to the organisers' skill in bringing together such a large rural coalition under their banner. It is also proof of the scale of anger felt across the nation, by very different communities, united in their sense of distance from Government. Yet, while they were at one in their willingness to protest, the banner under which they marched was a thing of shreds and patches: a mixture of appeals to preserve traditional freedoms, a pronounced streak of conservatism and an appeal for state subsidy.

The Government has already shown a willingness to listen to the marchers' grievances, but ministers should sort out the wheat of legitimate complaint from the chaff of special pleading.

The marchers' list of demands is best seen as three, not entirely overlapping, agendas. There is an honourable plea from country dwellers to be spared the illiberal interventions of a Government which should understand a little more and ban a little less. The arguments for outlawing foxhunting are different from those which led the Government to ban beef on the bone and incline it to reduce the drink-driving limit. But those measures, as well as enraging countrymen, are indicative of a bossy streak in this administration which alienates even those who are otherwise enthusiastic supporters. The inclination to outlaw that of which it disapproves, rather than respecting individual choice is, if not the cloven hoof beneath the horn of Tony Blair's Government, certainly its Achilles' heel. Even those with little time for the countryside, or its complaints, should support the marchers in their plea for tolerance and liberty.

The marchers also speak for England, and the other countries of the kingdom, in their appeal for more sensitive development of the nation's green places. There is a widespread

intuition that the "brickish skirt" around our cities has expanded too far, too much of rural England has lost the tranquillity it once enjoyed and the car has been king for too long. Although the anti-roads campaigners' respect for the land, as the Archbishop of Canterbury has pointed out, can shade into New Age idolatry, their defence of the environment has resonated in public opinion. It has already been reflected in John Prescott's plans for future housebuilding and may need amplifying through reform of the tax structure. The green strand in the marchers' banner is a noble one.

But alongside that strand runs a greedy streak. The third element in the marchers' manifesto is a straightforward demand from farmers for more money. It is true that small farmers on near subsistence incomes in upland areas are in genuine need. It is widely accepted that agriculture, unlike other industries, deserves subsidy because farmers are not just food producers but stewards of the environment.

That does not, however, legitimise every claim made by the farming lobby for more cash. There may be those enduring lean years now, but they have had very many fat years when the common agricultural policy played to their advantage. BSE is a tragedy, but can those farmers who were so anxious to feed their cattle with the cheapest fodder available legitimately escape some of the blame themselves? Are some of those farmers who defend support from the urban taxpayer because they are asked to safeguard the countryside not themselves guilty of ripping out hedgerows and scattering chemicals in their race for profit?

Mr Blair has shown in the past week that he will listen to sincere appeals from the countryside. The quiet voices of the rural liberals and conservationists who speak for so many should not be obscured by the pleas of the agribusiness interests.

FALSE EQUIVALENCE

Iraq and Israel are not comparable

With Saddam Hussein and Iraq out of the spotlight for now, Robin Cook is determined to restore Britain's standing with the Arab world. He will use a speech to the Anglo-Arab Association this week to blame Binayamin Netanyahu for the sorry state of the Middle East peace process, and will reiterate that message during a visit to Israel next month. The Foreign Secretary is keen to address Arab charges of hypocrisy: the impression that Iraq is severely punished for violations of United Nations resolutions while Israel commits the same offence without sanction. He will stress his commitment to ensuring that Mr Netanyahu makes further concessions.

There is no shortage of hypocrisy in this region. The strongest example is the notion that Iraq and Israel are comparable. There is a huge difference between a democracy surrounded by hostile states willing to deploy against it all forms of weaponry, including a biological and chemical arsenal, and a dictatorship that has constantly threatened those around it with weapons of all forms, including anthrax and nerve gas. That the UN sometimes neglects that distinction undermines its own credibility.

The Foreign Secretary will doubtless emphasise the land-for-peace formula. This is entirely legitimate. The central question, though, is: how much land and where for what sort of peace? Israel's right to exist is absolute. It cannot be conditional on the approval of surrounding states. The land-for-peace technique has worked well with Egypt but the Sinai Desert was not essential to Israel's survival. There is a fundamental difference in dealings with the Palestinians and Syria. In either case it would be much

easier for Yassir Arafat and President Assad to rescind the peace then for Mr Netanyahu to reoccupy the land.

A lasting settlement in the Middle East must be based on stronger foundations. Israel will need to transfer further territory but in return will require more than promises of goodwill from those who, until relatively recently, were pledged to its destruction. Peace must be coupled with cast-iron assurances of security. The pre-1967 boundaries cannot deliver such certainties. They were the catalysts for three intense conflicts in less than two decades. In contrast, the current map — although unsatisfactory — has helped to prevent an all-out Arab-Israeli war for 25 years.

None of this, anyway, will improve relations with Iraq. If Israel conceded all that was asked of it — without care for its own welfare — it would neither shorten Saddam Hussein's tenure nor alter his thirst for weapons of mass destruction. Nor would Iran become more pliant if Israel were more passive. And Libya would not cease to be a threat. Israel's confidence in its prospective Palestinian partners was hardly enhanced by demonstrations in the West Bank calling for Iraq to unleash anthrax on Tel Aviv. It will be gravely undermined by the weekend's discovery of a substantial arms cache meant for Palestinian militants.

The Middle East peace process does need nudging and the Americans, rather than Britain or the EU, still represent the best chance of outside mediation. The chances of an Arafat-Netanyahu understanding are better than often estimated, but they will not be advanced by misleading comparisons and unreasonable demands.

CONSTANT AND NOBLE

Salute the city which preserved the best of Rome

Almost 600 years ago Henry IV received at his court a remarkable visitor from the East. Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos, the last Byzantine Emperor of the stature of Justinian, came to London on a desperate mission to raise funds in the West to defend the shrinking Christian enclave of Byzantium from the surrounding Ottoman Turks. Yet his fundraising and statesmanship were not enough to ward off catastrophe. Fifty-three years later, during the reign of his son, the Ottomans finally captured Constantinople. One of the world's longest-lasting empires finally came to an end.

England was the furthest point Manuel Palaiologos reached in his travels, and to the English Byzantium has always been a distant, unknown glory. But this week some of its dying splendour returns to London with a festival that underlines how brilliantly learning and the arts flourished in the East while the West was still emerging from the Dark Ages. Art, music, and literature will be on display in London's Hellenic Centre. Actors will read some of the little-known histories and discourses from Byzantium. John Julius Norwich will lecture on art, and Sir Steven Runciman, Britain's foremost authority on Byzantium and the Crusades, will sum up the civilisation whose influence on the Renaissance is only now being fully recognised.

The high point will be a concert in St Paul's on Wednesday that features a new work by John Tavener and brings together, in a ground-breaking ecumenical move, the

two sides of Christianity's first great schism. In 451, the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch split from the Greek-orientated Byzantine Church, over the nature of Christ. Appropriately, the Prince of Wales, an ecumenical enthusiast, will be there to greet patriarchs from the East who have rarely celebrated together in 1,500 years.

British interest in the Eastern churches is growing. The renaissance in its own country of the Russian Orthodox Church after decades of Communist persecution, the new pride in Orthodoxy in the Balkans and the survival of churches and ecclesiastical traditions in the Middle East have all been significant factors for stability and continuity in the turbulent politics of these regions. They share a common ancestry in Byzantium. And because, in Constantine's new capital, the learning and culture of the later Roman Empire continued unbroken, so the city that appeared to outlive its time by centuries became the repository of scholarship that would otherwise have been lost.

This week's festival is part of a six-month programme, "Greece in Britain", which aims to promote Hellenistic culture. The package has been largely sponsored by Greece to mark Britain's presidency of the European Union. Grand cultural gestures accompanying these rotating political terms are often slanted or superficial. This is neither. It is a valuable elucidation of the Hellenistic and Byzantine civilisations which indirectly did so much to influence our own. We owe a debt of thanks to Greece.

'Flawed' system of choosing bishops

From Canon R. Colfax Craston

Sir, Professor Robin Gill, in calling for reform of the system of appointment of Church of England bishops (letter, February 26), is incorrect in asserting that appointments are made by "a small group of largely nominated and only in part elected people". The constitution of the Crown Appointments Commission states that six of the eight permanent members are elected by proportional representation method by the houses of clergy and laity of General Synod. The two other members are ex-officio — the two Archbishops. The four diocesan representatives are directly elected by the Diocesan Vacancy in See Committee. So, ten out of twelve are elected.

I too have travelled widely in the Anglican Communion, as a member of the Anglican Consultative Council for 15 years, six as its chairman. There is, as the professor says, widespread criticism abroad of the Church of England system, not least because of failure to understand as well as to approve of the established position. But what I have also come across are features of the systems in other Anglican Churches that I would not want to see in England. They include electioneering that is less than Christian, and aggressive political trade-offs by minority pressure groups.

Having served ten years on the Crown Appointments Commission I am not averse to development and improvement in the system — that happened between 1982 and 1992. But it should be with caution. I do not believe there is an acceptable halfway house between a confidential and an entirely open system.

Yours faithfully,
R. C. CRASTON,
12 Lever Park Avenue,
Horwich, Bolton BL6 7LE.
February 26.

From Mr Richard Tarran

Sir, Professor Gill is undoubtedly right in calling for a review of the present, flawed system. One important aspect of it is the reaction of those under the spotlight who are subjected to the politicking and controversy.

It would not be surprising to learn that men of the highest calibre were either withdrawing their names because of the intense pressure emanating from the leaks and speculation, or were making it clear that preferment was not being sought.

This in turn would result in a dilution of the quality of church leadership, leading to a hand Church with an uninspired episcopate, ill-equipped to respond to the increasingly complex issues confronting the Church today. A Gospel interpreted by a politically acceptable and politically correct bishop is a far cry from the Gospel preached and presented by some of the great and visionary bishops of yesteryear.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD TARRAN
(Diocesan Secretary),
Diocese of Monmouth,
64 Caerau Road, Newport NP9 4HJ.
February 26.

From the Archdeacon of Surrey

Sir, People are elected because they are popular; they are appointed because they are competent. I would rather have competent bishops who may become popular, than popular bishops who may prove incompetent.

Yours sincerely,
R. P. REISS,
Archdeacon's House,
New Road,
Wormley, Surrey GU8 5SU.
February 27.

Hillsborough decision

From Mr Denis Christian

Sir, It seems to me that Miss Rosie Brocklehurst (letter, February 24) would have the Home Secretary require another investigation into the Hillsborough disaster so that we may all "share the burden of grief" within some form of mass therapy.

This is not a function of government, nor would it be a sensible use of public money.

I am sorry that Miss Brocklehurst has lost her political faith and left the Labour Party, and wish that I could offer her another home years ago her ideas would have been worthy of the old Liberal Party.

Yours faithfully,
DENIS CHRISTIAN,
The Town House, 2 Chichester Place,
Kemp Town, Brighton, BN2 1FE.
February 24.

Not cricket

From Mr W. A. Jenkyn-Jones

Sir, Oh to be an MCC member [letters, February 27]. We in Wales have our constitution changed by a mere majority.

Yours faithfully,
W. A. JENKYN-JONES,
The Bryn, Redwick, Gwent NP6 3DE.
February 25.

Sport letters, page 33

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Commercialisation of archaeology

From the Director of the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit

Sir, As author of national guidelines on competitive tendering in archaeology (report, February 24) I am aware of compelling evidence that the present system has been abused by individuals from all the sectors concerned. At least some of this abuse arises from pressures due to recent changes in the nature of archaeological funding, and the fact that many archaeological organisations are not flourishing despite an apparent increase in commercial funding. The most significant cause of the current problems is, however, the failure to select a method of tendering which is appropriate to archaeology.

The present system of competing on a job-by-job basis by bidding to clients who often have little or no knowledge of, or interest in, the academic or public benefit of the product they are buying most lead to difficulties. All parties, including Government, should look at alternative competitive systems that have proved elsewhere that both commercial and public interests can be properly served, and which might cut down on the 17 per cent extra costs that have arisen from the present unsustainable process.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN WALKER,
Director,
The University of Manchester
Archaeological Unit,
Oxford Road, Manchester M13 0PL.
February 25.

From Professor Richard Hodges

Sir, The leading country in the practice of archaeology is now compelled to accept Dr Geoff Wainwright, the chief archaeologist of English Heritage, commencing competitive tendering to study sites before developers move in as "the price we have to pay for archaeology growing up and maturing".

We puzzle our European partners, who ascribe unequivocal importance to the science of recording and publishing archaeological data, often

using British-invented techniques of recovery, who could not dream that we should so wantonly, knowingly sell our past to the cheapest bidder.

Dr Wainwright made his reputation as a field archaeologist by setting high standards in excavation and publication of archaeological sites. Such places, once excavated, as he knows, are lost for ever. It is time that our patrimony was accorded the standards that he set in the past and for which British archaeology abroad is renowned.

It is time to reassert that the nation's archaeology is an enduring asset. It is about knowledge and explanation; not simply "an industry worth £35 million a year".

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD HODGES,
School of World Art Studies
and Museology,
University of East Anglia,
Norwich, Norfolk NR4 7TJ.
February 24.

From Mr David Graham

Sir, I note that Geoffrey Wainwright is reported as claiming to have created "an industry worth £35 million a year" by introducing competitive tendering into British archaeology.

I sometimes wonder whether England would be better off without English Heritage, but I am quite sure that English Heritage would be better off without a chief archaeologist who thinks archaeology is an "industry". It is not. There is no merit in accumulating endless reports for their own sake.

The object of the exercise is not just academic — it should be to interest people, and this must involve local archaeological units who know their own area and are prepared to serve their local communities.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GRAHAM
(Chairman, Waverley Archaeological
Advisory Committee),
Stannards View, Frith End,
Bordon, Hampshire GU35 0QR.
david-graham@email.msn.com
February 24.

Masonic disclosure

From Mr Howard Portway

Sir, Since the Home Affairs Select Committee apparently finds it sinister that the Grand Lodge is reluctant to issue lists of its members (report, February 20; letters, February 21), I wondered what organisations would be liberal with such details.

The local golf club politely told me that they had a clause in their membership agreement forbidding them to reveal members' names. The Essex Federation of Women's Institutes understandably said that they do not publish such information. Labour Party headquarters refused to provide a list, saying that type of information was restricted to certain party officials.

Which leaves me with a dilemma. For although, as a member of the public, I can go into the library at Grand Lodge and look up the names of officers and members of local lodges in the Essex Masons yearbook, I cannot find out which of them belongs to such "sinister" organisations as the local golf club or the Labour Party. I think I can, however, be fairly certain that sinister or otherwise, they will not belong to the WI.

Yours faithfully,
H. A. PORTWAY,
35 Jays Lane, Marks Tey,
Colchester, Essex CO6 1LR.
howard.portway@btinternet.com
February 23.

From the Grand Secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England

Sir, May I clarify the attitude of the United Grand Lodge of England to

disclosing membership.

English Freemasons are at liberty to disclose their membership; the only restriction is that they do not do so for the purpose of personal gain. Indeed, we actively encourage every Mason to be open about their membership of the Craft.

We take the view that it is up to each individual to decide the extent to which he is prepared to make disclosure and accordingly Masonic authorities do not disclose members' names without the agreement of those concerned. There are exceptions to this; if disclosure is required by a court or, for example, the police or an ombudsman in the course of official inquiries, membership is disclosed, but not without the individual being informed.

In the absence of such a requirement an individual is entitled to his privacy unless, for example, disclosure is appropriate because of a possible conflict of interest.

Yours faithfully,
M. B. S. HIGHAM,
Grand Secretary,
United Grand Lodge of England,
Freemasons' Hall,
Great Queen Street, WC2B 5AZ.
February 24.

From Mr Humphrey Cranfield

Sir, If judges — why not bishops and the higher clergy? —

Tribute to Cook

From Mrs C. Memphis Salter

Sir, I am a staunch Conservative and have little faith in Mr Blair's policies, but I was most impressed by Robin Cook's article (February 25) in which he explained the Government's stance on Iraq.

If the Conservatives had used similar methods of keeping the public informed they might still have been in power.

Yours faithfully,
C. MEMPHIS SALTER,
Lismore, 140 Lower Road,
River, Nr Dover, Kent CT17 0RW.
February 26.

Striking contrast

From Mr K. W. Woznica

Sir, Why is it that, in spite of the much acclaimed competitiveness of British industry (low labour costs, long working hours, non-striking workforce) and its own oil supplies and large inward investment, Britain still has such a large deficit in foreign trade?

France — with labour costs nearly 50 per cent higher, a militant and frequently striking workforce, a highly regulated economy and no oil — managed to obtain in 1997 a surplus of 173 billion francs (£17 billion), against a probable British deficit in the order of £10 billion.

Yours faithfully,
K. W. WOZNICA,
Willowsprings, Longhedge,
Corsley, Wiltshire BA12 7QZ.
February 28.

Green belt still at risk from building

From Sir Norman Fowler, MP for Sutton Coldfield (Conservative)

Sir, The issue of development in the green belt and the countryside (report, "Keeping fields green will cost, says Prescott", February 24) is not confined to housing. It extends also to industrial development.

In the green belt around Birmingham — in my own constituency — some 150 acres of excellent agricultural land are to be destroyed to make way for a micro-electronics factory. For this Mr Prescott is directly responsible.

At the public inquiry to consider the application the development was opposed by local residents, councillors, and myself. We were without the advantage of legal representation. We were met by an array of lawyers backing the development — including a legal team appearing for Birmingham City Council, who own the site and will make a very substantial capital gain on its sale.

In spite of this we won our case and the inspector recommended that the application should be rejected. According to the inspector, development would lead to the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Nevertheless, last August Mr Prescott overruled the inspector and the development is set to go ahead.

As long as Mr Prescott makes decisions like this it is impossible to take seriously this Government's newfound enthusiasm for the countryside.

Yours faithfully,
NORMAN FOWLER
(Shadow Secretary of State for
Environment, Transport and
the Regions),
House of Commons.
February 27.

From the Leader of Rushcliffe Borough Council

Sir, The Deputy Prime Minister's statement that the proportion of new housing to be developed on brownfield sites will be increased from 50 per cent to 60 per cent may be a step in the right direction, but in some parts of the country it will be so small a step as to be insignificant.

Mr Prescott admits that the proportion of brownfield sites will vary throughout the country, and in the East Midlands his own figures indicate that this will not be much above 30 per cent. Indeed, in the borough of Rushcliffe in south Nottinghamshire, where there are virtually no brownfield sites, the threat to the green belt of accommodating some 5,000 new houses between now and 2011 remains unaffected by Mr Prescott's announcement.

The 4.4 million new homes projection is both flawed and discredited. As your leading article, "Shifting ground" (February 24), points out, there will be no real change to housing policy and the threat to the countryside will remain undiminished until this projection is revised.

Yours faithfully,
R. COOK,
Leader, Rushcliffe Borough Council,
Members Room, Civic Centre,
Pavilion Road, West Bridgford,
Nottingham NG2 5FE.
February 24.

Dropping a dangle

From Rear-Admiral Michael Harris

Sir, The fact that English Heritage has forbidden the tuning of three of the eight bells of St John's, Waterloo (report, February 18; Weekend, February 21; letter, February 21), reveals another inroad that the State is making into our quality of life.

Those of us who enjoy ringing, and the many more who have to listen, will not be impressed by the fact that their ill-tuned noise is the result of a committee decision.

How many people, I wonder, would appreciate the sound of an historically important piano with only five-eighths of its notes in tune?

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL HARRIS,
King's Lodge, Church Street,
Whitchurch, Hampshire RG28 7AS.
February 24.

Stick a tax on gum

From the Reverend Nick Percival

Sir, Scientists have already invented something for getting chewing gum off the pavement (letter, February 26). It is called a shoe.

Yours faithfully,
NICK PERCIVAL,
88 King George Road, South Shields,
Tyne and Wear NE34 0DT.
February 26.

Country quandary

From Mrs P. C. R. Whittle

Sir, I am unable to join my husband on today's march as I am cherishing a national asset (his dog).

For the first time in many years I have just seen a rabbit exercising its right to roam in our garden. Should I send the dog out to chase it? One needs the exercise — the other my vegetables.

Yours dispassionately,
ELIZABETH WHITTLE,
Thrift Wood,
Pigeon House Lane, Freeland,
Wimsey, Oxfordshire OX8 8AG.
March 1.

OBITUARIES

DERMOT MORGAN

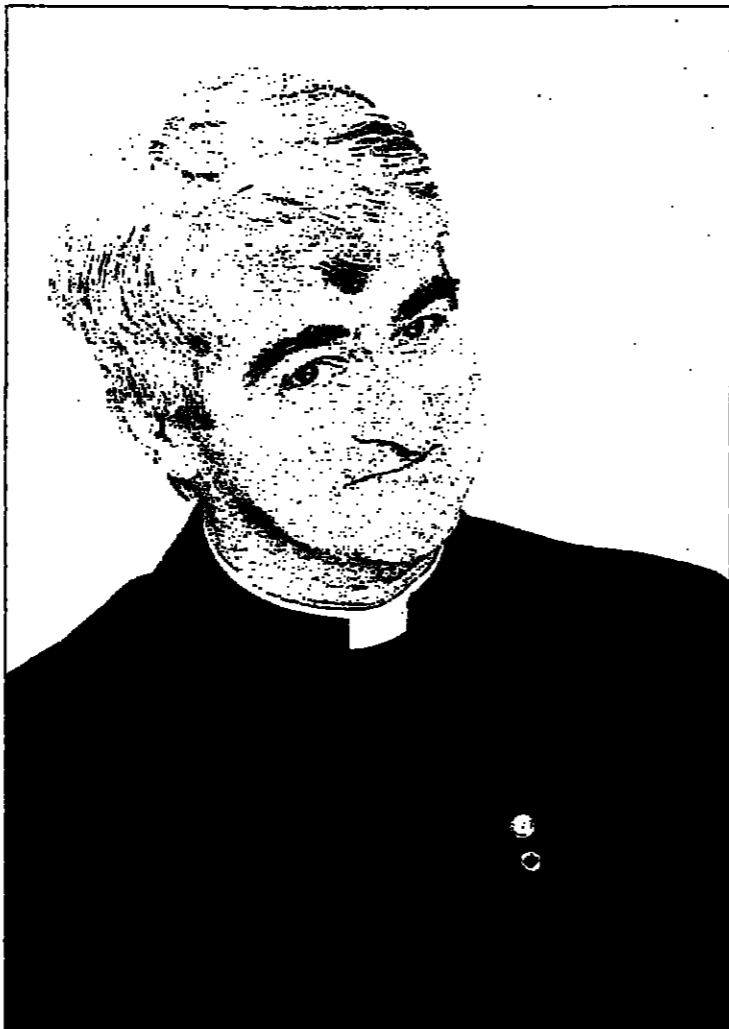
Dermot Morgan, actor, comedian and writer, died yesterday aged 45 after collapsing at home. He was born on March 3, 1952.

The part of the blundering Father Ted made Dermot Morgan famous throughout the British Isles, but his comic talent had long been appreciated — and feared — in his native Ireland. For two decades he had been sending up everyone in Ireland whom he considered pompous, and causing regular scandals. Although *Father Ted* was filmed in Co. Clare, it was made for Channel 4 — and for Morgan as for many others, it was success in Britain that finally forced open all doors at home.

Father Ted is the head priest on Craggy Island, off the west coast of Ireland, where he lives in the zany confinement of Parochial House with two other eccentric priests, Dougal and the unhinged Jack, and their shrewish housekeeper, Mrs Doyle. Their surreal adventures became a cult. As well as meddling around the island, betting, and chasing local wildlife, Ted was also revealed to have an illegitimate son.

Naturally, the show was condemned by some Catholic bishops, who complained that it made the clergy look like idiots. No doubt that piece of idiocy — with 200,000 earnest fan letters being sent to homes around Dublin — helped to boost it further.

Playing the well-intentioned but ineffectual Father Ted was but the last round in Dermot Morgan's struggle with the Roman Catholic Church. As what he called "a severely lapsed Catholic", he remembered and resented the influence the Church had had in his youth. He was educated at a Christian Brothers college, which he later described as "good paramilitary training", and for a while he intended to become a priest. Compulsory religion in adolescence, however, inoculated him against the idea, and behind his



adult lampoons stood a conviction that the Church was systematically hypocritical.

After University College, Dublin, he became a teacher in 1974, but always knew that he wanted to write and perform, and appeared as a stand-up comic in small clubs. He left teaching in 1978, and broke into

television with a four-year stint on Mike Murphy's popular comedy show *The Live Mike*.

As well as sending up politicians, Morgan played the young and eager priest Father Trendy, who was hooked on modern communications and given to elaborate metaphors. His book *Trendy Sermons*, published

in 1982, took many well-aimed potshots at the Church. Some of his targets condemned him as blasphemous (though others thought him hilarious), and he found himself dropped by every Irish radio and television station. He was forced to return to the small-time comedy circuit, and briefly faced bankruptcy.

Three years later, however, he topped the Irish charts with *Thank you very much, Mr Eastwood*, a record mocking the boxer Barry McGuigan's habit of thanking his manager, Barney Eastwood, for everything after his fights. Morgan was also renowned for his mimicry of politicians such as Charles Haughey, and in 1992 he greeted Albert Reynolds's entry into office with another record, *A Country and Western Taoiseach*, with fine impressions of Reynolds and the Justice Minister Pádraig Flynn.

In 1990, with Gerry Stenbridge, Morgan began writing, directing and performing in *Scrap Saturday*, a sharp satirical radio show akin to *Spitting Image*. It tore into Irish politicians, making many distinctly uncomfortable. Morgan won a Jacob's radio award in 1991, when he was also voted Ireland's National Entertainer of the Year.

However, despite its popularity, *Scrap Saturday* was abruptly cancelled in 1992, apparently because the originating broadcasting service, RTE, with its dependence on the Government, considered it too risky. RTE, however, claimed that the programme had simply "run out of steam". Morgan later said of Irish politics that "it was getting harder and harder to outstrip reality", and last year his demotic and unwitty abuse of Irish MPs made front-page news in Ireland.

When *Father Ted* began in April 1995, RTE declined to screen it, though some parts of the Republic were able to receive it on Channel 4. Later, however, with the series winning plaudits in Britain, RTE caved in and quickly found it had a popular

hit. The humour, after all, was not only at the expense of the Church and the Pope, or even the Irish, but attacked every kind of taboo. Although considered too incorrect for American audiences, it was screened in many other countries.

"Before Ted, my fame ended at Howth," Morgan said, but after Ted he was to be seen as a personality on high-profile shows such as *Have I Got News for You* and *The Late Late Show*, and chatting with Clive James and Russell Harty. He continued to give one-man performances, although a tour of Ireland last year, with a show called *Addressing the Nation*, drew mixed reviews.

In 1996 Morgan won an award for Top TV Comedy Actor for his part as Ted, and *Father Ted*, produced by the production company Hat Trick, which specialises in comedy, also won a Baffa award for Best Comedy and several others. It was also successful on video.

A third eight-part series of the madcap half-hour comedies, written by Graham Linehan and Arthur Mathews, begins on Channel 4 next Friday. As one of the station's great successes of recent years, it is being promoted by an extensive advertising campaign.

A clever and fluent wit, Dermot Morgan was always on the lookout for a gag. His writing was remorselessly mischievous and derisive, and his success could be measured by the controversy that he continued to excite. He had recently been working on a drama series and developing two further sitcoms, as well as a novel. He was passionate about football, and also wrote a film about the Archbishop of Dublin in the 1950s who condemned a football match in the Republic against players from communist Yugoslavia.

Dermot Morgan was separated from his wife, Suzanne, for several years before their recent divorce. He is survived by two sons from his marriage, and by his long-term partner, Fiona, and his son.

SIR GEORGE MIDDLETON



Sir George Middleton KCMG, former Ambassador to Egypt, Argentina and Lebanon, died on February 12 aged 88. He was born on January 21, 1910.

servicing briefly as Britain's representative on a committee established to examine the finances of the UN.

George Humphrey Middleton was always cosmopolitan. Although born in London, he had spent most of his boyhood in Paris, where his father worked as Lloyd Bank's chief representative. He was sent to school at St Lawrence College, Ramsgate, from where he went to Magdalen College, Oxford, to read French and Spanish. He ran the French and Spanish societies at Oxford for a while and also played tennis for Magdalen. After Oxford, he spent a year in Heidelberg learning German before entering the consular service in 1933.

Coming up the hard way, he served successively in Buenos Aires, Asunción, New York, Lvov (Poland), Cluj (Romania), Geneva, Madras and Washington (where he was a contemporary and bridge-playing partner of the much grander and lachrymose Mossadeq). Although Mossadeq's histrionics made him something of a hate figure in the British press, Middleton recognised his intelligence, and a mutual respect developed before diplomatic relations were severed in late 1952. Middleton then had to evacuate the Embassy, organising an overland convoy across the Desert, through Baghdad and Damascus to Beirut. He was the last man to leave — with his Alsatian dog, which shared the headlines with him.

His performance had established his reputation, and led him to a series of postings in which he found himself faced with a variety of emergencies. After three years as Deputy High Commissioner in Delhi he became Ambassador in Beirut just before Suez. He paid tribute to his arrival to the way in which such an ethnic mix of people could live in peace and harmony. Within a short while, however, he was living behind a 24-hour guard as anti-British riots saw bombs going off in his garden and gun battles outside.

In November 1958 Middleton was made Political Resident in the Gulf, based in Bahrain, just after the Iraqi revolution and at a time when Arab nationalism was dominating politics in the region. He was to sign the deed of independence for Kuwait before leaving in 1961 to become Ambassador in Argentina. After Buenos Aires he moved to the Embassy in Cairo — from which he was thrown out once again after two years as the Organisation for Arab Unity reacted to the crisis in Rhodesia. By this time, Middleton, whose first marriage had broken down and who was about to become involved in a divorce case, felt that he had had enough. He thus opted for early retirement — after

Appointed CMG in 1950 and advanced to KCMG in 1953, he was also honoured by several foreign countries and became a leading member of overseas societies in London. He was a gifted linguist, speaking seven languages. In other respects, however, Middleton was essentially Anglo-Saxon. Robust in physique and intellect, he was eternally patient and pragmatic — and given to understatement. He enjoyed good company, however, and was a connoisseur of fine cigars.

George Middleton is survived by his French-born second wife, Françoise, and by their son, as well as by a stepson and stepdaughter.

KENNETH WATT

Kenneth Watt, former chairman and president of Tattersalls, died on February 9 aged 83. He was born on September 12, 1914.



FOR more than half a century, Kenneth Watt was the guiding light of Tattersalls and the man who was primarily responsible for propelling the firm to its present-day domination of the bloodstock selling market. As an auctioneer with a most profound knowledge of his subject, he was an attraction in his own right at the Newmarket sales, when his brisk patter would go something like this: "Filly by Habitat; wonderful breeding on paper. Although as we all know, you can't race on paper..."

Watt was personally responsible for setting records in the sales ring. In December 1967 many of the horses owned by the late Major Lionel Hollis-

day, a prominent owner-breeder, were offered by Tattersalls. Among them was Vaguely Noble, who had proved a highly promising two-year-old, but who held no classic engagements whatsoever.

ever. The lack of classic entries, nevertheless, did not deter Dr R. Franklyn, an American plastic surgeon, from taking a gamble, and amid scenes of mounting excitement as the bidding rose to greater and greater heights, Watt finally knocked down Vaguely Noble for \$136,000 guineas: a new world record price at public auction for a horse in training.

The gamble paid off, for in joint ownership and trained in France, Vaguely Noble more than recouped his purchase price; his victories culminated in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe. Nor was this the only spectacular figure achieved by Watt from the rostrum. In 1983, he came out of retirement and sold the first million-pound yearling, by Hello Gorgeous out of Centrepiece, for his great friend Paddy Byrne of Lodge Park Stud.

Then, three years later, Watt again came out of retirement

in order to officiate at the somewhat sad occasion of the dispersal sale of the bloodstock owned by Jim Joel, who, like Watt, was an old boy of Malvern. Joel's eyesight had deteriorated so much that he could no longer see his horses, so he reluctantly decided he would have to part with them: 25 broodmares and fillies in training.

Among the famous broodmares that Watt sold for him was Joel's 1981 1,000 Guineas winner, Fairy Footsteps, who fetched top price of 720,000 guineas. Also auctioned was her dam, Glass Slipper, who had bred another classic winner for Joel in Light Calvary (St Leger 1980). After the sale — which realised nearly £4,000,000 — Joel, as a mark of gratitude, presented his fellow Old Malvernian with a silver cigarette-case which he had treasured since serving in the 15th Hussars in the First World War and which was subsequently equally trea-

sured by Watt. On the case was an indentation made by a bullet, testifying to the fact that it had saved Joel's life.

After Malvern, Kenneth Rupert Watt was educated at Sandhurst and Trinity College, Cambridge. His love of horses stemmed from childhood in Donegal and his hero-worship of two impressive uncles who were enthusiastic men to hounds. A regular soldier serving in the rank of captain, he was commanding the Cavalry Squadron of the Cambridge University Officer Training Corps when in 1942 he was called in to help Tattersalls following the deaths of two of their partners.

In 1945, he was invalided out of the army and joined Tattersalls permanently. By 1947 he was a partner, and he became senior partner only four years later. Eventually chairman, "the captain" as he was invariably known in the firm, possessed a zestful, personal and, above all, modern

approach to work and his staff, and was instrumental in ensuring that Tattersalls, traditional though it may have been for two centuries since the days of the renowned high-flyer, had any cobwebs on its image firmly swept away.

It was he, for example, who initiated the move from Knightsbridge, where Tattersalls had been for so long, and not only built the new and handsome Park Paddocks at Newmarket, but also continued improving those fine premises. In addition, he was responsible for the creation of the sister company, Tattersalls (Ireland).

In 1996, in recognition of Watt's immense importance to the firm and his prime part in propelling it into the leading place in the field, he was made president, a new office specially created for him.

Elizabeth, his wife of 30 years, died in 1976. This was a great blow to him. There were no children.

JAN BUTLIN

Jan Butlin, dramatic writer and director, died following a haemorrhage on February 10 aged 57. She was born on February 16, 1940.



AT ONE moment in a varied career, Jan Butlin achieved the distinction of having three plays that she had directed running simultaneously on the commercial West End stage: *Why Not Stay for Breakfast*, *Two and Two Make Sex* and *There Goes the Bride*. It was a signal feat for a non-male director — all three plays ran for more than a year — and one that has yet to be equalled by so young a woman.

Her writing career began with an episode for Jimmy Clithero's series *The Clithero Kid* and then in an early sign of the range of her work — she researched and wrote 24 episodes of one of the first health-and-style series on British

television, *Let's Face It*, for Thames TV. However, comedy and the joy she found in working with actors who could find the laughs and play the truth of a character was the focus of much of her working life.

Two D's and a Dog was an off-the-wall comedy series for Thames about two accident-prone characters in search of gainful employment, and starred a very young David Jason. Two other young actors, Richard Beckinsale and Barbara Flynn, were cast in her first West End success, *Two and Two Make Sex*, which starred Patrick Cargill.

She loved actors and respected the work they did, and particularly enjoyed recruiting players at the beginning of their careers, taking pride in the success they later enjoyed. But she also worked with many stars: Derek Nimmo in *Why Not Stay for Breakfast*, Robert Morley and Joyce

Carey in *A Ghost on Tiptoe*, Bernard Cribbins in *There Goes the Bride*, Moira Lister in *A Perfect Pitch*, Geoffrey Palmer in *A Friend Indeed* and, from television, a stage adaptation of *Last of the Summer Wine* with Bill Owen and Peter Sallis — both of whom spent many long hours at her flat in London surrounded by pages of script, arguing and exchanging ideas, all presided over by her beloved cat.

She found immediate success on commercial television with a series about a couple in their forties who are having a baby, subject-matter that the BBC of the time considered a bit too bold. But Yorkshire Television found they had a hit on their hands after the first episode of *Life Begins at Forty*, which attracted 16 million viewers and was top of the ratings for five of the initial seven episodes. The series also brought Butlin a Writers'

Guild award nomination for the best part on television created for a woman, a role that Rosemary Leach had played to perfection.

Jan Butlin had begun her career as an actor (and is still one of the youngest people to have gone to RADA). Her early parts ranged from

serious drama to *Ernie the Milkman* with Benny Hill. But writing became increasingly important to her.

More television series followed including a particular favourite of hers, *That Beryl Marston*, an acerbic comedy about falling out of love, with Gareth Hunt and Julia McKenzie. Next came *Third Time Lucky*, with Nerys Hughes and then — another chance to work with Derek Nimmo — a satirical comedy about the church, *Hells Bells*, which also starred the Robert Stephens. While working on this, she began her first novel, *GL*, which was published on both sides of the Atlantic. Her second novel, *The Legacy*, was an ambitious story involving time-slips between the present and a 17th-century troupe of travelling players. A third novel is currently in the hands of a publisher.

Jan Butlin is survived by her husband, Martin King.

Church news

Appointments
The Rev Richard Goodhand, Assistant Chaplain, HMP Ranby, and Priest-in-Charge, Clabrough w Hayton (Southwell); to be Priest-in-Charge, Rainworth St Simon and St Jude, and Blidworth St Mary (same diocese).
The Rev Victoria Raymer, Assistant Curate, Eaton Socon St Mary (St Albans); to be Priest-in-Charge, Milton Ernest, Thurligh, and Odell and Pavenham (same diocese).
The Rev Simon Tillotson, Curate, Paddock Wood St Andrew (Rochester); to be Curate, Ormskirk St Peter and St Paul (Liverpool).
The Rev Stephen Walker, Priest-in-Charge, Grove Green LEP St John's, and Children's Ministry Adviser (Chatterbury); to be Team Vicar, Drypool (with special responsibility for Victoria Dock) (York).

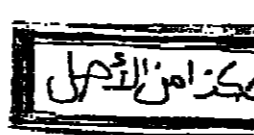
The Rev Pete Wilcox, Team Vicar, Gainshead St Edmund's Chapel w Holy Trinity, and Venerable Bede, and Director, Urban Mission Centre, Cranmer Hall (Durham); to be Priest-in-Charge, Walsall St Paul (Lichfield).
The Rev Sarah Wood, Curate, St Ilogan (Truro); to be Rector, Heanton Punchardon w Marwood (Exeter).
The Rev Frank Yates, Curate, Chesterfield St Mary and All Saints (Derby); to be Priest-in-Charge, St Newlyn East, and Diocesan Religious Education Schools Adviser (Truro).
Retirements and resignations
The Rev Derek Birch, Vicar, Hoylandswaine and Silkstone w Stainborough (Wakefield) retired December 31, 1997.
The Rev Michael Escritt, Team Rector, Hasby w Wigginton (York); to retire May 31 on health grounds.
The Rev Nigel Gibson, Rector, Stamford St Mary and St Martin (Lincoln) to resign April 12.
The Rev Alan Hall, NSM Winterbourne Stockland and Turnworth, Winterbourne Houghton, Winterbourne Whitechurch, Winterbourne Clenton (Salisbury) retired January 1.
The Rev Malcolm Inman, Vicar, Cleckheaton St John the Evangelist (Wakefield) to retire April 1.
The Rev Paul James, Priest-in-Charge, Moore and Norton in Hales (Lichfield) to retire February 28.
The Rev Nelson Kagwa, Vic-

ar, Wordsworth Avenue Sheffield St Paul (Sheffield) resigned on December 31, 1997.
The Rev Roger Kent, chaplain, Prague St Clement, Czech Republic (Europe) to resign April 30.
The Rev Gwilym Lloyd, Rector, Darlaston St Lawrence (Lichfield) resigned January 1.
The Rev Geoffrey Harper, Vicar, Paul (Truro) retired January 31.
The Rev Ruth Milverton, NSM Weymouth Holy Trinity (Salisbury) retired October 31, 1997.
Other appointments
Kathleen Lawrence to be part-time Assistant Local Ministry Officer for Forest South and Forest North deaneries (Gloucester).
Judith Talbot, Reader (Oxford); to be Co-ordinator, Longhill Link Up Trust (York).

RHODESIANS CALM ON REPUBLIC
Rhodesia slips quietly into republican status in the first minutes of tomorrow morning. Today Mr Clifford Dupont, the Officer Administering the Government, signed the proclamation which will appear in a Government Gazette Extraordinary tomorrow dissolving Parliament. Only Mr Ian Smith, the Prime Minister, and a handful of officials watched the ceremony.
It was rather different from November 11, 1965, when Rhodesians hysterically welcomed the Rhodesian Front Government's seizure of independence from Britain. But for a long time now, many, like Mr Smith, have regarded the country as a de facto republic. The republic will usher in a new constitution designed to maintain white government indefinitely but it will have little or no immediate effect on Rhodesia's main external problem. Many Rhodesians once regarded the declaration of a republic as a certain method of achieving

diplomatic recognition from foreign countries. But recently Mr Smith has emphasized that there is no magic formula for this. In fact, the Government is more concerned to try to ensure that none of the 12 countries still maintaining some diplomatic presence in Salisbury decides to close its mission. This is the reason for the low-key transition.
Mr Smith is bending over backwards to avoid giving the impression that this is just one more provocative gesture by irresponsible rebels. The first official comment on Rhodesia's change to a republic will come tomorrow when Mr

ON THIS DAY
March 2, 1970
The declaration of the republic completed Rhodesia's break with the British Crown and Commonwealth.
The declaration of the republic completed Rhodesia's break with the British Crown and Commonwealth. It was a significant moment in the country's history, marking the end of its status as a self-governing colony and the beginning of its journey towards full independence. The declaration was made in Salisbury, then the capital of Rhodesia, and was signed by Ian Smith, the Prime Minister at the time. The new constitution, which provided for a republic, was adopted by the Rhodesian Parliament in 1970. This move was a direct challenge to the United Kingdom's authority over the territory, which had been a British colony since 1911. The declaration was met with mixed reactions internationally, with some countries recognizing the new republic and others, including the United Kingdom, continuing to regard Rhodesia as a self-governing colony. The process of achieving full international recognition for Rhodesia as a republic would take several more years.



NEWS

Country marchers win concessions

Rural communities were promised a stronger voice in the Cabinet and handed other concessions as the Government bowed to a mass show of "people power" with a march by more than 250,000 through central London.

As the countryside went to the capital in the biggest political demonstration in Britain for well over a decade, ministers pledged to "listen and learn" about concerns that the rural way of life is under threat. Pages 1-3

Prescott to order lower fares

John Prescott is to order lower train and bus fares for millions of passengers in a huge shake-up of public transport charges. Rail and bus companies will be told to introduce a much wider range of discount fares as part of the Government's drive to double passenger numbers. Page 1

Sugar recommended

A spoonful of sugar not only helps the medicine go down but is very good for you on its own, according to an expert international committee. Page 1

Patten book

Stuart Proffitt, the senior book editor who resigned from publishers HarperCollins last week is going to be offered the chance to edit Chris Patten's book, East and West after all. Page 4

Actor dies

Dermot Morgan, the Irish comedian and satirist best-known for his television role as Father Ted, died suddenly after hosting a dinner for friends. Page 5

Royal voucher

Even royalty wants value for money, so it should have been no surprise when the Princess Royal took advantage of the 'Eat for £5' offer from The Times. Page 5

Lonely hearts probe

Police carried out an undercover investigation in the 1920s into Britain's first lonely hearts magazine, sending replies from a decoy address to the advertisements, some of which sought homosexual relationships. Page 6

Major alleges assault

Major Eric Joyce dismissed from the Army after seven months of open rebellion has accused a senior Royal Military Police officer of assault. Page 7

In the footsteps of Horatio Nelson

The Royal Navy is expected to break with tradition, as it did with Captain Horatio Nelson, to promote an exceptional officer over the heads of more senior ranks. Rear Admiral Nigel Essenhigh cannot quite rival Nelson's rapid rise, but his appointment to the full admiral post of Commander-in-Chief Fleet will be unprecedented in modern times. Page 7

Livingstone ban

Senior Labour figures are planning to prevent the left-wing MP Ken Livingstone standing as the party's candidate for the mayor of London. Page 10

Parliament's home

Strathclyde House, an unprepossessing former council headquarters in Glasgow is expected to house the first session of the Scottish parliament when it convenes in January 2000. Page 10

Election turmoil

Counting begins today after India's general election, which looks certain to produce another "hung" parliament and prolonged political turmoil. Page 11

Dead Sea arms

Israeli troops intercepted a weapons shipment as it was being smuggled across the Dead Sea from Jordan. Page 12

Kosovo violence

Serbia's southern and Albanian-dominated province of Kosovo exploded into violence, with initial reports of about 20 deaths after clashes between paramilitaries and police. Page 13

Paula Jones letter

Paula Jones makes a compelling pitch for funds in a letter seeking help with her legal costs. But none of the money has gone to lawyers fighting her sexual harassment case against President Clinton. Page 14



The Angel of the North got its first view of snow yesterday as wintry weather returned to the countryside around Gateshead

BUSINESS

Shell move: Royal Dutch Shell is launching a venture to compete with GE Capital and Ford Credit in the provision of financial services to industry. Page 48

Base rate split: The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee is again likely to be split on the need for higher interest rates at this week's meeting. Page 48

Standard stake: The Singaporean tycoon who owns 15 per cent of Standard Chartered Bank would demand around £2 billion for his stake. Page 48

Drugs slowdown: Investors in Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham believe either Jan Leschly or Sir Richard Sykes may have to be forced to stand down in order to resurrect the merger. Page 48

Naughty but nice: The Erotic Print Society Review, once available only through mail-order, can now be found on magazine racks. Its contents leave little to the imagination but Editor Rowan Pelling says it is art, not pornography. Page 17

Fossil fight: Two prominent academics are at loggerheads over the significance of the Burgess Shale in British Columbia, where Cambrian sea-creatures have been miraculously preserved. Page 15

Bag ladies: In high-fashion circles, the handbag you clasp or swing speaks volumes. Page 16

Dreamscape: The Shared Experience theatre company brings to London six disagreeable characters in an intriguing drama by Judith Thompson. Page 18

Genesis, exodus: The once-great group, minus Phil Collins and with a new frontman, filled Earls Court arena and did their best to recall the glory days. Page 18

Arts on TV: Melvyn Bragg deplores the ending of a 30-year-old gentleman's agreement by which arts programmes on the big channels were not scheduled head to head. Page 19

Wraps off: After a 15-year, £11 million facility, Gilbert Scott's Albert Memorial is emerging from its scaffolding aglow with gold leaf once more. Page 19

Celebs: Mark Ramprakash displayed a new maturity in making 64 not out to help England to avoid the follow on in the fourth Test against West Indies. Page 25, 27

Football: Tottenham eased their relegation fears with a 1-0 victory over Bolton Wanderers, who remain in the bottom three, in the FA Carling Premiership match at White Hart Lane. Page 29

Golf: José María Olazábal fought off the effects of pharyngitis to win the Desert Classic by three strokes in Dubai. Page 26

Rugby union: Northampton ended Newcastle's unbeaten record with a victory in the quarter-final of the Telford Bitter Cup. Page 34

Sailing: Toshiba could be disqualified from the Whitbread Round the World Race for allegedly using her engine illegally on the South American coast. Page 26

Athletics: Ashia Hansen emerged as a new leading light in British athletics by winning a gold medal and establishing a world record in the triple jump at the European indoor championships. Page 24

1, 7, 15, 18, 30, 31. Bonus: 9. Seven tickets each won £1,149,673; 43 won £56,277 for five numbers and the bonus; 1,371 won £1,128 for five numbers; 69,954 won £48 for four numbers; 1,165,696 won £10 for three.

Preview: Unsung heroes of science: Local Heroes (BBC2, 8pm) Preview: Paul Hoggart finds if I Ruled the World (BBC2) a bit hit-and-miss. Pages 46, 47

A country balance

The banner under which the country campaigners marched was a thing of shreds and patches: a mixture of appeals to preserve traditional freedoms, a pronounced streak of conservatism and an appeal for state subsidy. Page 21

False equivalence

There is a huge difference between a democracy surrounded by hostile states willing to deploy against it all forms of weaponry, including a biological and chemical arsenal, and a dictatorship that has threatened those around it. Page 21

Constant and noble

The city that appeared to outlive its time by centuries became the repository of scholarship that would otherwise have been lost. Page 21

WILLIAM REES-MOGG

The Asian panic gives no reason to suppose that Europe's relative decline has now come to an end. Page 20

PETER RIDDELL

The real danger for the Neil Committee is not of parties buying elections but of donors buying favours. Page 20

MARTIN FLETCHER

Against all odds, and despite its awesome load, the Northern Ireland peace train continues to inch towards its destination. Page 20

Burton Morgan, actor; Sir George Middleham, diplomat; Kenneth Watt of Tattersalls. Page 23

Appointment of bishops: archaeology as a business; green belt building; freemasons. Page 21

Italy, the most European-minded of nations, is jubilant that it looks like qualifying for the single currency in May. But few Italians appreciate the reality: that the world's best-built, around its economy will fall with the Euro for three. Corriere Della Sera, Milan

ARTS

Sheel move: Royal Dutch Shell is launching a venture to compete with GE Capital and Ford Credit in the provision of financial services to industry. Page 48

Base rate split: The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee is again likely to be split on the need for higher interest rates at this week's meeting. Page 48

Standard stake: The Singaporean tycoon who owns 15 per cent of Standard Chartered Bank would demand around £2 billion for his stake. Page 48

Drugs slowdown: Investors in Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham believe either Jan Leschly or Sir Richard Sykes may have to be forced to stand down in order to resurrect the merger. Page 48

BUSINESS

Shell move: Royal Dutch Shell is launching a venture to compete with GE Capital and Ford Credit in the provision of financial services to industry. Page 48

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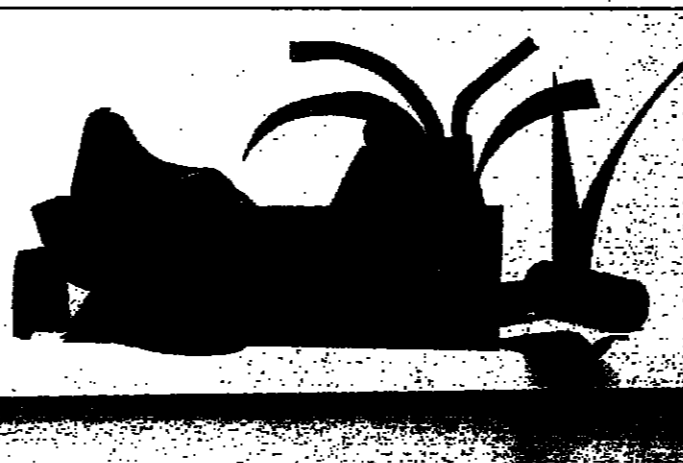
ARTS

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TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

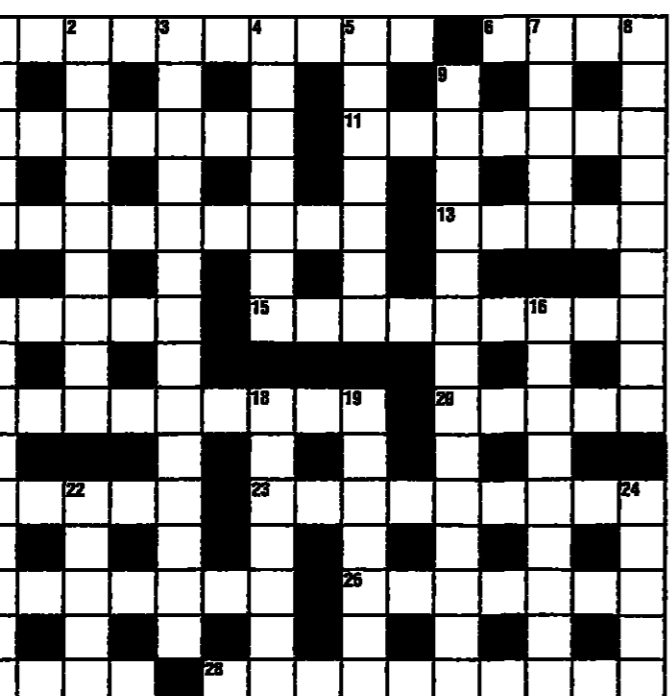
ARTS

The sculptor Anthony Caro draws new inspiration from the old masters

LAW

Is it time couples started to adopt the pre-nuptial agreement so popular in America?

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,728



- ACROSS
1 Toy train in nursery (10).
6 Purchase a bag (4).
10 Countryman finding game hard to flush out (7).
11 Flat in possession of constabulary (7).
12 Remarkable effects of flower being set back by degree of soil acidity (9).
13 Go into business without first part of pay rise (5).
14 Waterway dug to preserve a lake (5).
15 Set with live broadcast news chief transmitted (9).
17 Worker in firm in charge - amazing (9).
20 It needs place for insertion on side of boat (5).
21 Section of deck not used by hands (5).
23 Came back from desert, returning mostly without water (9).
25 Overdraw one's account (7).
26 Dressed to cross cold slope (7).
27 Part of church first to abandon sin (4).
28 Upheaval in restoring West Berlin, say (10).
DOWN
1 Suddenly appear in advantageous position after pawn opening (3,2).
2 Leading Greek and plucky maiden entering unknown (9).
3 Academy, perhaps, offering one final interaction with greats (4,2,8).
4 Most intense trial following introduction of heretical religious work (7).
5 End of flower blooming before autumn (7).
7 Soldiers meeting obstacle in renewed occupation (2,3).
8 Early Christmas present adorning tree (9).
9 One offering views from track - comment has upset drivers (11,3).
14 Restaurant where there's never any waiting (9).
16 Result of frozen bank deposits (9).
18 To run exercise, carry out weapon (7).
19 Settling the charge resulting from company fraud (7).
22 Circuits protecting many lights (5).
24 Daily radio intros listener found boring (5).

The solution of Saturday's Prize Puzzle No 20,727 will appear next Saturday. The five winners will each receive a £20 book token.

AA 1998 OPERATIONS

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Hours of business
Sun rises: 6:44 am
Sun sets: 5:52 pm
Moon sets: 10:52 pm
Moon rises: 8:48 am

First quarter March 9
London 5:42 am to 6:42 am
Bristol 5:52 pm to 6:52 pm
Edinburgh 5:43 pm to 6:50 am
Manchester 5:52 pm to 6:53 am
Perthshire 6:25 pm to 7:32 am

WEATHER

General: snow showers in far north of Scotland. Rest of Scotland starting dry and bright but rain in afternoon. Elsewhere much milder but mostly cloudy. Rain spreading from west. South East should escape with showers and some sunning.
London, SE England, Central S England, E Midlands, Channel Islands: mild and mainly dry with sunny spells. Moderate southwest wind. Max 12C (54F).
E Anglia, E England, NE England: mild but mostly cloudy and wet. Moderate southwest wind. Max 12C (54F).
W Midlands, SW England, Wales: dull and wet morning, drier and brighter by afternoon. Moderate southwest wind. Max 12C (54F).
W of England, Lake District, Isle of Man, Central N England: mostly cloudy but mild, rain at times. Moderate southwest wind. Max 11C (52F).
Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, Argyll: a little milder than recently but cloudy with outbreaks of rain. Moderate to fresh southwest wind. Max 7C (45F).
Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, NW Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: cold with sleet and snow showers. Fresh to strong southwest wind easing later. Max 4C (39F).
Northern Ireland: mostly cloudy with outbreaks of rain but milder than recently. Light to moderate southwest wind. Max 8C (46F).
Irish Republic: milder, overcast with rain or drizzle. Wind southwest, fresh at first. Max 11C (52F).
Outlook: England and Wales remaining mild but breezy with rain at times. Scotland colder with wintry showers.

24 hrs to 6 pm: b=light; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; ds=cl; f=fog; g=gale; h=heavy; s=sleet; sh=showers; st=st; t=thunder; w=wind

Table with columns for location, sun, rain, max, min, wind, and other weather details for various UK cities.



Table with columns for location, AM, HT, PM, HT, TODAY, AM, HT, PM, HT, showing temperature and weather forecasts for various cities.

Copyright reserved. All times GMT. Heights in metres.
Yesterday: Highest day temp: Guernsey, 13C (55F). Lowest day temp: Ballyvaughan, Shetland, 2C (36F). Highest night: Sarncliffe, Poole, 0.8C. Highest sunshine: Oxford, 9.5h.

Advertisement for travel insurance: 'However many times you hop across to Europe you're covered with our travel insurance. From £49.95. To enrol call quoting reference TW803. Available to non-Cardholders. 0800 700 737. No compromise.'

Advertisement for newspapers: 'NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING. Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the raw material of all UK newspapers in the 1st half of 1997. 0336 411 216. 0336 411 217.'

UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT

GINOLA'S DAY

Tottenham overcome Bolton
PAGE 29

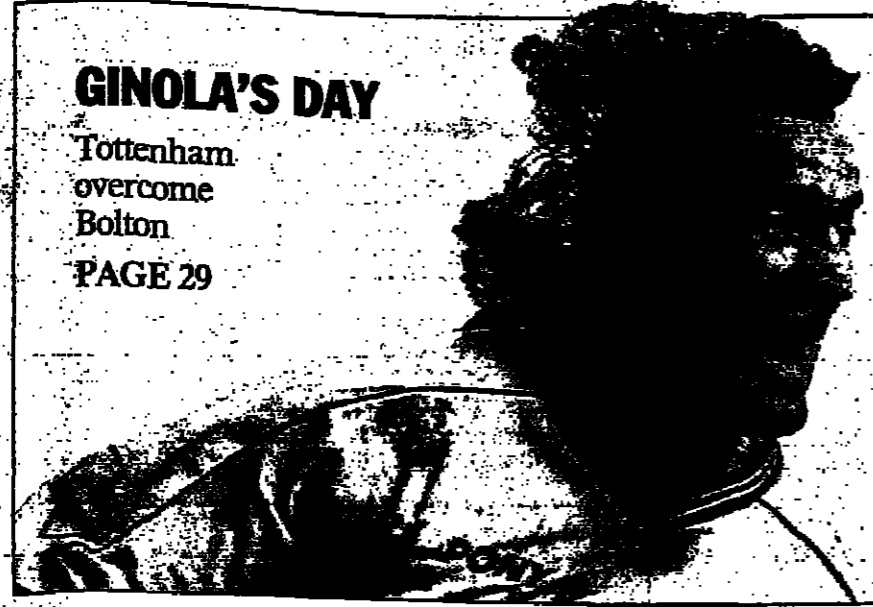
BRIMFUL OF ASHIA

Hansen and Edwards leap to gold in Valencia
PAGE 26

DESERT STORM

Olazabal wins the Dubai Open
PAGE 26

PLUS
Lynne Truss has something to prove
PAGE 33



TIMES SPORT

MONDAY MARCH 2 1998

REARGUARD ACTION GIVES ENGLAND HOPE IN GEORGETOWN



Ramprakash gives cause for optimism

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN GEORGETOWN, GUYANA

FROM the moment that he took strike amid looming crisis on Saturday evening, pushing his pad rather than his bat at the line of his first ball and leaving it with impassive judgment, there was something different about Mark Ramprakash — something reassuring, which is not a word that has often sprung readily to mind about his batting for England.
Ten minutes after lunch yesterday, from successive balls, he completed only the third half-century of his Test career and averted the follow-on in the fourth Test against West Indies. In the short term, the latter was of far greater importance; longer-term, the England team could profit immeasurably for the belated graduation of a previously flawed and frustrating talent.
Entering at 65 for four and watching as it quickly became 75 for six, Ramprakash spent Saturday night as England's last logical hope of attaining the 153 they needed to make West Indies bat again and, at worst, turn a potential three-day defeat into an extended dog-fight for a draw.
Precedents were discouraging. West Indies do not often allow a cornered team the sight of escape and Ramprakash himself had no pedigree in self-fulfilment at such times. Rather, he had been cruelly cast as an eternal misfit, a loser. Yet, on another sun-filled morning in Guyana, the improbable occurred.
Ramprakash reached 30 for the first time in 21 innings against West Indies, but he did not stop there. He made 65 before running out of partners, giving England renewed hope of going into the last two Tests still level in the series.
In 20 previous Test matches spanning seven years in waiting, Ramprakash has never batted so convincingly. He has occupied the crease extensively, though often painfully, and he has flattered deceptively with brief, neurotic vignettes. Here in Georgetown, the native city of his father, he put it all together at last — and how England needed it.
It is somehow symbolic of Ramprakash's career that, on this latest of many Test comebacks, he should have to play his entire innings in a continuing emergency and that even when he stood on the threshold of a defining half-century, he had to go one step further or be damned as part of an undignified failure.
Many times, in the past,

such pressing demands have inhibited his style and crushed his technique. It has happened so often, indeed, that some have reluctantly been tempted to give up on him as a Test match cricketer.
Ramprakash has tended to brood and fret, to become solitary and even sullen as opportunities have passed him by while others have prospered.
He came on this tour fully aware that time was short, but approaching it positively.
Report, scoreboard 27
Masataq magic 27
Doull's delight 27
"This might be my last chance to turn it around," he admitted during the opening week on Antigua, an illusory week in which he convinced himself he would be part of the Test team from the outset.
He did not play in the first three Tests, indeed did not play at all until last weekend here in Georgetown, when heads were finally turned as he made 77 against Guyana. It was a late audition, but it convinced those who mattered. Ramprakash was promoted and, this time, he

was prepared for the loftier stage.
Sessions with Steve Bull, the team psychologist, have undoubtedly helped him. So too, has family life — he became a father for the first time in September. He has coped with disappointment where before it would have soured him, and the runs he made this weekend were not only precious for his country but for his own self-belief.
The way he left that first ball from Courtney Walsh, a ball he would often have thrust at fatally, was symptomatic of a notably more relaxed style. His front foot came confidently down the pitch throughout his 220 minutes at the crease and, mostly, the middle of the bat followed. When it didn't, there was a smile rather than a fret and then he simply got on with things again.
Ramprakash found time to enjoy a joke with the opposition and to cajole and counsel his batting partners. He was no longer a man so hopelessly entrapped in a web of fear that he dared not play a shot, speak a word, even lift his head. Suddenly, he looked at ease with his surroundings and, even on a day of communal relief, that was the best possible news for English cricket.

Ramprakash remained unbeaten where others like, from left, Atherton (0), Hussain (1), Croft (26), Headley (0) and Fraser (0) could not. Croft helped add 64 for the seventh wicket before Ramprakash steered England past the follow-on. Main photograph: Kieran Doherty



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ATHLETICS

Mayock puts Edwards in golden shade

FROM DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT, IN VALENCIA

JONATHAN EDWARDS yesterday added the men's triple jump gold medal to the world record that Ashia Hansen had set here in the women's event on Saturday, but it was John Mayock who produced the greatest surprise from a Great Britain point of view at the European indoor championships. Mayock became the first Briton since Ian Stewart in 1975 to take gold in the 3,000 metres.

Mayock's victory met with a chorus of disapproval from the Spanish crowd, who jeered him on his lap of honour after a bruising race. The Yorkshireman had an agonising wait to find out whether his gold medal would be upheld as the Spaniards lodged a protest, which was rejected. Typical of indoor running, where banked tracks and tight bends make elbows an essential weapon, this was a physical contest and Spain did not like the outcome one bit. Their men finished second, third and fourth.

Valencia results 39

With 500 metres to go, Mayock was almost brought down and, along the back straight for the final time, he looked like becoming the potato in a Spanish omelette. He nudged his way through and reached the final bend ahead.

Mayock is known for his finishing kick and the race was his. The time was slow, 7min 55.09sec, but that hardly mattered to British supporters who have had to endure a pitiful decline in middle-distance standards. So far has Britain fallen that not one man was chosen to come here in either the 800 or 1,500 metres.

Mayock is trained by Peter Elliott, the former Commonwealth champion and indoor world record-holder, who represents the last link with the golden era. This has been quite a winter for Mayock, who was married recently to a girl he met while judging a beauty contest.

Victory for Edwards came after the disappointment of silver medals in two successive international championships. He had come here, he said, to "get rid of the frustrations". His winning leap, at 17.43 metres, was short of what might have been hoped for, but it was the colour of the medal that counted.

If Hansen has been blazing a trail with British records, so too has

Janine Whitlock in the pole vault. When Whitlock made a first-time clearance at 4.25 metres, it was her 22nd British record. She was eliminated at the next height, but fourth place was a splendid effort.

To get where she has, Whitlock has needed a generous father. A jobbing builder in Liverpool, Tony Whitlock spent more than £6,000 in 1996 to finance his daughter's sporting ambitions at a time when she received not a penny to appear in British meetings. Expenses included fees for training facilities, poles and travel. At the end of that year, he said: "If Janine is successful internationally, we shall have to say that it was in spite of the sports system in this country, not because of it."

Whitlock, 24, is one of the emerging breed of British athletes. While the failure of Julian Golding, 23, to live up to his status as the fastest man in the world this year at 200 metres was disappointing, there were medals for Diane Allahgreen, 23, Jason Gardener, 22, and Allyn Condon, 23. Britain had won at least one medal in the men's 60 metres at six successive European indoor championships and Gardener ensured that the sequence was extended. He took the silver medal in 6.59sec, behind Agelos Pavlakakis, from Greece, who recorded 6.55sec.

Allahgreen came to the championships with a personal best 8.21sec, improved to 8.10sec in the semi-finals and, in the final, almost came away with the British record. Held by Jackie Agyepong at 8.01sec, it looks vulnerable after Allahgreen recorded 8.02sec. The bronze medal, though, delighted her. Golding, by contrast, was a dejected fourth, leaving Condon to win Britain's first European indoor medal at 200 metres since Ade Mafe took the gold in 1989.

Among the most eagerly-awaited events was the women's 3,000 metres, in which Fernanda Ribeiro, the Olympic 10,000 metres champion, from Portugal, was to face Gabriel Szabo, the 5,000 metres world champion, from Romania. Within a few strides of the start, both were on the floor as a tangle of legs and elbows decked four of the 12 starters.

However, they picked themselves up and, before the first lap was completed, occupied the front two positions. Soon they were clear and, after Ribeiro had taken most of the work, Szabo kicked away to win in 8min 49.96sec.

Hansen steps on to world stage

David Powell on the record set in Valencia that sent the confidence of a British triple jumper soaring

Ashia Hansen is not sure where she came from, but she seems clear on where she is going. Hansen does not know her natural parents, cannot remember where she lived when she was brought to Great Britain from Ghana by adoptive parents, but she has little doubt that she will not be stopping long in the triple jump district that she inhabits at present.

That is in the vicinity of low 15 metres. Hansen, having set an indoor world record of 15.16 metres here on Saturday to win the European indoor title, said yesterday that jumping beyond 16 metres was "very possible" for her. She watched a replay of her jump that added 13 centimetres to the world record and sounded as critical as the voice of British sport's best-known A Hansen.

"It looked OK, but it was a bit untidy and I could pick faults in it," Hansen, 26, said. "The jump phase looked as though I dived into the pit." There were other reasons why she thought that she had merely scratched the surface of her potential.

"I have hardly done any speed work," she said. Furthermore, she is convinced that more sites will follow her first international championship gold medal, complementing two European Cup wins and a grand-prix final victory. She was better-equipped, she said, than her leading rivals — all of whom are European — because, unlike them, she had not taken a "short cut" to 15 metres.

Her gist was that, as a relatively new event for women, the triple jump had attracted former long jumpers who were hopping far and struggling to control their step. "I have gone the long way round," she said. "I was not as strong as they were and had to approach it by a different route."

Born in Evansville, Indiana, Hansen was adopted by two United States-based students, Emmanuel and Elaine Hansen. Aged 2, her Ghanaian father and English mother took her to Accra, where she lived until she was 8. They came to London — "I cannot remember where" — and eventually she settled in Ilford. Now she lives in Birmingham, having moved there to be near Aston Moore, who is her coach.

Hansen's adoptive father died when she was 14, but she remains close to her mother. She has tried to



Hansen is a study in concentration on her way to a world record and the gold medal at the European indoor championships

trace her natural parents, but will leave a vigorous attempt until her athletics career is over.

Hansen is not the finished article yet, never mind the wonderful present that she gave British athletics at its time in need. "She is one of the nicest athletes I have come across, not a nasty streak in her, and that is something I have got to work on," Moore said.

The question of whether Hansen has the psychological match for her physical talent has been a common

theme since she reached international class in 1994. In three successive international championships, she was eliminated in the qualifying round.

Then, at the 1996 European indoor championships, she reached the final but produced three no-jumps. She would have retired, she said, had her boyfriend, mother and fan mail not persuaded her otherwise. What change in her now, she is so confident that she is thinking of ordering a trophy cabinet.

SPORT IN BRIEF

McRae and Mäkinen forced out of rally

MOTOR RALLYING: Colin McRae, of Scotland, was forced to withdraw from the Safari Rally in Nairobi yesterday after suffering mechanical problems on the tenth stage. McRae had moved into second position behind Tommi Mäkinen on the eighth timed section of the event, but the engine of his Subaru Impreza started to overheat two stages later. McRae arrived at the service area with steam pouring out of the bonnet and his engineers were unable to identify the problem.

Piero Liatti, McRae's team-mate, was struck by an identical problem on the same stage and also had to pull out. Mäkinen, the world champion, who was on course to gain his second victory in three events this season, also withdrew with engine failure. Mäkinen, of Finland, had led from stage two on Saturday and had a five-minute lead.

Cullen takes third title

ATHLETICS: Keith Cullen secured his third successive British cross-country title and confirmed his place at the world championships in Morocco in three weeks. The 25-year-old Essex runner beat Andrew Pearson, of Yorkshire, by 2sec and Glyn Thomas, of Coventry, by 33sec during an exciting trial in Cardiff. Cullen, who had a time of 35min 2sec on a fast 12-kilometre course, said: "I knew I was in fantastic shape. I was bouncing along."

Cobras strike back

ICE HOCKEY: Newcastle Cobras confirmed that regular-season form means little in post-season games by beating Sheffield Steelers 4-3 in overtime on Saturday (Norman de Mesquita writes). In eight previous meetings this season, the Cobras had beaten the Steelers only once. Scott Allison, who scored twice for the Cobras, and his team-mate, Nicky Chin, were ejected towards the end of the second period, with Carmine Van, of the Cobras.

Lionesses are tamed

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL: Millwall Lionesses, the holders, were held to a 2-2 draw after extra time by Liverpool Ladies in the quarter-finals of the FA Women's Cup at Fisher Athletic yesterday. Gemma Hunt, 16, put Millwall, who had come from behind, 2-1 ahead two minutes into extra time, but Leanne Duffy forced a replay in the 104th minute.

Webb coasts home

GOLF: Karrie Webb, the world No 2, won the Australian Ladies Masters by five strokes yesterday, her first win on home soil. Webb finished on 272, 16 under par, at the Royal Ennes club, on the Gold Coast. Annika Sorenstam, the world No 1, of Sweden, was second. Laura Davies, of Great Britain, finished ten shots behind Webb in joint-eleventh place.

East Dorset triumph

BOWLS: East Dorset won the Denny Cup for the first time when they defeated Cambridgeshire, the 1996 champions, 76-65, in a gruelling final at Lawson Park, Kempton, yesterday. Julian Haines and Russell Morgan sealed the triumph, steering their rinks to 25-17 and 18-12 victories respectively.

Williams in ascendancy

TENNIS: Venus Williams reached the final of the IGA Tennis Classic in Oklahoma City with a 6-7, 6-2, 6-3 win over Lindsay Davenport, the world No 2, on Saturday, and was due to play Joannette Kruger, of South Africa. Williams said: "This is the most emotional I have ever been in a match."

SAILING

Toshiba in trouble for using engine

By EDWARD GORMAN, SAILING CORRESPONDENT

TOSHIBA, the Whitbread Round the World Race yacht, skipped by Paul Standbridge, of Great Britain, and managed by Team Dennis Conner, faces possible disqualification from the fifth leg for allegedly using her engine illegally on the way up the South American coast.

Toshiba crossed the finish line at São Sebastião in Brazil in the early hours of Saturday morning in sixth place, just an hour and a half behind Grant Dalton's *Merit Cup*.

Yesterday, the Whitbread race committee released a statement in which it said it was protesting "over an incident on February 22 during leg five in which Toshiba used her engine to give the boat sternway in order to clear weed from the boat's underwater appendages, in breach of racing rule 42.1".

The statement added that the race committee did not consider that the circumstances amounted to an emergency. It also said that Toshiba had not reported the incident to race headquarters at the time, as the rules require, nor had the crew reported the fact that the seals on the engine shaft had been broken in breach of the standard sailing instructions for the Whitbread.

The incident was only formally reported to officials when Standbridge and Kelvin Harrap, a crewman, included it in their leg-five declaration, some 12 hours after they

finished. The fate of Toshiba will be known probably tomorrow, when the five-man international jury, led by Peter Siemsen, from Brazil, considers the matter.

Standbridge is facing a range of penalties, should the jury find against him. Toshiba could be let off with a financial fine or a docking of points, but it is also possible that she could be disqualified from this leg altogether, or even from the race.

However, Standbridge said yesterday that he did not believe either of the more dramatic outcomes likely, maintaining that Toshiba did not gain propulsion from starting the engine, as the protest alleges. He believes his only mistake was in not reporting the incident at the time.

"It's a very sensitive matter and obviously I wish it had never happened," he said. "We will try and defend it to a minimum penalty for what I believe was really a correspondence error. I made — there was no question we weren't going to admit it."

Dalton reached São Sebastião with a suspected broken collar bone sustained on February 16 as *Merit Cup* was sailing in rough conditions in the Southern Ocean. Dalton, who decided to keep the injury quiet until he reached Brazil, will see an orthopaedic surgeon in Auckland, but said: "I will be back for the next leg."

BASKETBALL

England's rebels routed

By NICHOLAS HARLING

THE endless catalogue of grievances held by the England players against their national governing body culminated in an 82-68 defeat against Israel in Manchester on Saturday. The outcome was obvious from the opening minutes, when John Amaechi and Steve Bucknall squandered a series of free throws.

As the two members of the squad that returned from its momentous European championship victory in Belarus on Wednesday — an otherwise nightmare trip — who complained loudest and longest at their treatment from the English Basketball Association (EBA), Amaechi and Bucknall suffered more distractions than most.

Together with Peter Scantlebury and Roger Huggins, they head the list of players threatening to boycott the national team. In a statement by the squad, it was suggested that "if the EBA do not wish to make a commitment to the national programme, they should cancel it rather than just dabble".

The grievances include an alleged failure to provide proper immigration papers for the Belarus trip and hold-ups in payments to players that meant that they could not eat properly there.

Peter Knowles, the EBA chairman, said: "It is well known that there are not adequate resources for the national team."

TENNIS

Kafelnikov enjoys stroll in the park

By JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT

YEVGENY KAFELNIKOV'S memories of London may not have been fond in advance of the Guardian Direct Cup final in Battersea Park. The Russian, now ranked No 4 in the world, had not advanced beyond the Wimbledon quarter-finals in four previous visits, but he made off with the laurels yesterday after an emphatic dismissal of Cedric Pioline, of France, 7-5, 6-4.

As impressive as Kafelnikov's triumph was that of the event's organisers, who, in less than five months, erected a facility that found favour with players and spectators alike. It is not often that some of the world's best-paid sportsmen are asked to perform in a tent in the midst of a British winter. That they took to the concept, many vowing to return next year, marked a victory for adventurism over convention — the latter a powerful influence within the ATP Tour.

It was an impressive London debut for promoter Jeremy Dier and his partners, who have laid out in excess of £2 million to bring indoor tennis to Great Britain for the first time in seven years. "Everyone said it was a big risk, but we felt it was worth it," Dier said yesterday. "People have also talked about us losing money on our first year, but we might even make a small profit."

Given the time constraints in bankrolling sponsors and promoting the event, the tour-

namer looks booked for a lengthy run. Dier and ProServe, the management group that handled the "tennis" side of things, have tapped into the British audience's lack of regular exposure to top-class tennis. Hasty exits from Tim Henman and particularly Greg Rusedski failed to dampen enthusiasm among spectators over the weekend.

Among the most complimentary about the new site was Kafelnikov, who collected £80,000 and his fifteenth career title. He looked close to the form that swept him to the ATP Tour world championships final in November as he bettered Pioline — a 6-3, 7-6 semi-final victor over Jan Siemerink on Saturday — for the ninth time in ten meetings.

As befits a fighter, Kafelnikov, who mastered Wayne Ferreira, 7-5, 6-4, in his semi-final, always believed that he would retrieve an early deficit against the Wimbledon finalist. "I knew that if I could stay with him on every point, his confidence would shake," he said.

Meanwhile, Rusedski, profoundly disappointed to make a first-round exit at the hands of Marc-Kevin Gollner, journeyed to Rotterdam for the ABN/AMRO World Tennis Tournament. Seeded No 3, Rusedski plays the Moroccan, Karim Alami. His ranking is almost certain to drop one place, to No 6, when the world list is updated this morning.

GOLF

Classic victory is perfect tonic for ailing Olazabal

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT IN DUBAI

winner of major championships.

Olazabal is one of the most honest and likeable of men and there was a ring of truth to a remark he made after his victory when he admitted that, in a sense, he did feel fortunate. "If I had not met that German doctor in Munich, I might not be here today," he said. That doctor told him that the original diagnosis of arthritis in his feet was incorrect and that the pain he was suffering in his feet came from his spine. "It was pure luck that I met him," Olazabal said.

There have not been many days during the nine events that have been played over this course that have been as windy as yesterday was. It is normally possible to see several miles in the clear light of the desert, but, by the time



Olazabal showed resolve

that the leaders teed off soon after 1pm, visibility was barely half a mile as sand swirled and the wind sent dried palm leaves the size of dinner plates bowling along the fairways.

Four major championship winners — Greg Norman, Ian Woosnam, Ernie Els and Olazabal — were within five strokes of Robert Karlsson, the leader, and two strokes of one another, but Norman, Woosnam and Els were unable to sustain a significant charge.

The best score from this distinguished trio was a 72 by Els, the US Open champion, who got to within one stroke of the lead before falling away. Olazabal covered the inward nine in 23, making birdie at three of his last six holes. The moment that he realised that he had a chance came on the 13th, where he holed out from 75 yards down the fairway for an eagle three. That gave him the lead over Karlsson, who fell away with a 75. Olazabal dropped a stroke at the 16th, where he took three putts, but he birdied the 17th and, once he made sure that he got over the water on the 18th without misadventure, the tournament was his.

His 68 was a demonstration of resolve that was unmatched by everyone except Stephen Allan, a 24-year-old Australian of Scottish parentage. Allan birdied five holes, starting on the 11th, to move up the board as fast as some others were coming down it. But the day and the week belonged to Olazabal.

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Handwritten signatures and scribbles at the bottom right of the page, including what appears to be a name in Arabic script.

Atherton clings to hopes of draw as West Indies extend lead in fourth Test match

England follow Ramprakash's lead

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT
IN GEORGETOWN, GUYANA

ENGLAND clung desperately to life and hope here yesterday. Cast adrift, apparently helplessly, after two days of this fourth Test, they defied long odds by avoiding the follow-on and then making early inroads into the West Indies batting as they sought to expand a first-innings lead of 162.

Mark Ramprakash, displaying a maturity and resilience previously beyond him, navigated England to the initial haven with an unbeaten 64. His best innings in Test cricket will be his most influential of this match as he saved, which presently is highly doubtful, but, in his first overseas Test innings for more than two years, he could not have done more.

The threat of following on and of losing inside three days was seen off by the last-wicket pair of Ramprakash and Tufnell during an improbable stand of 30. West Indies, setting off at hot-headed pace, then lost three wickets inside seven overs, including the first-ball run-out of their first-innings-century-maker, Chanderpaul.

After a single day's play, England had known that the best they could realistically achieve was a draw. Their revival on Saturday, in which the last seven West Indies wickets were taken for 57, offered only the delusion of exchanged roles.

For all that, it was a staunch performance by the England attack to rally, after four hours of one-way traffic on Friday. Headley was outstanding, rising to the challenge of increased duties and thoroughly deserving of his two additional wickets. When the two spinners bowled together after lunch on Saturday, they claimed the remaining four wickets for five.

The ball had begun to turn appreciably from the stumpy sand-like surface, but, though plentiful slow bowling was available to Lara, it seemed unlikely that he would need it. First Ambrose, then Walsh, bowled peerless spells from the northern end, combining speed with unflinching control, and the loss of Atherton, as usual, preceded trouble.

Butcher, having played with composure for an hour, perished wastefully against one of the few fast balls from Bishop, but it was the fall of Stewart that sent England into freefall.

Dignath Ramnarine, introducing his brisk, purposeful leg-breaks to Test cricket

aged 22, twisted the screw. His capture of both left-handers, Thorpe and Russell, turned a precarious position into an apparently hopeless one and, at 87 for six overnight, England were wistfully reliant on deliverance from either Ramprakash or rain.

The latter did not oblige. Ramprakash did, though, finding a stoical partner in Croft for a seventh-wicket stand of 64 that carried England to within 14 of the foothold that could prolong this match. It is a moot point, however, how much this pair were assisted by another 187-zarre piece of captaincy by Lara.

It seemed automatic that Ambrose and Walsh should resume the attack at the start of play. Instead, Lara ignored Ambrose, giving two more spells to the wayward Bishop and employing his spin bowlers before lunch. Ambrose did not bowl until the follow-on was avoided and then only when Lara was off the field nursing a finger injury.

The pitch continued to behave better than its appearance would suggest was possible. The seam bowlers, though frequently breaching the surface alarmingly, obtained only occasional uneven bounce and the spin bowlers increasingly seemed more threatening.

Hooper lured Croft down the pitch in his second over of the day, but Williams missed the stumping chance. Croft had made only 11 at this point and England would have been marooned at 102 for seven, but it was another hour before the breakthrough was made.

Croft had taken off-stump general and stepped faithfully in line whenever his weakness against the short ball was tested. He had reached 26, in almost two hours, when he cut at Hooper and was caught at slip.

Four balls later, Headley pushed down the wrong line to be caught behind and, when Fraser swept misguidedly at Ramnarine and Lara ran from slip to short fine-leg for the catch, it seemed England would fall short after all. Three wickets had fallen for one; 13 runs were still required and Tufnell, who had made 100 in three of his past four innings, was shuffling to the middle.

Somehow, he hung on as Ramprakash rattled him to two balls an over and tried to reduce the deficit himself.



Hussain, centre, is acclaimed by his England team-mates after brilliantly running out Chanderpaul yesterday. Photograph: Kieran Doherty

England still required three when lunch was taken and, when Walsh beat Ramprakash three times in an over immediately afterwards, the faces on the England balcony were a study in suspense.

They made it with a scampered two through Lara's increasingly vulnerable hands at slip. Ambrose finally retrieved Tufnell, who had resisted for a remarkable 31 balls.

West Indies came out blazing. Stuart Williams was caught at second slip, driving at Headley, and Campbell turned Fraser to short-leg. Next ball, Chanderpaul took on Hussain's arm from cover and paid the penalty.

Lara, whose day was not going well, offered two chances — one put down at square-leg by Butcher, the other a leading edge that Atherton lost in the back-ground — but, crucially, he survived, looking to take the game beyond England's most optimistic reach.

SCOREBOARD FROM GEORGETOWN

WEST INDIES: First Innings		ENGLAND: First Innings	
S I Campbell c Hussain b Headley 10 (20min, 48 balls, 1 four)	13	*M A Atherton c Lara b Ambrose 0 (15min, 44 balls, 4 fours)	0
S C Williams c Thorpe b Fraser 13 (37min, 20 balls, 1 six, 1 four)	13	A J Stewart c D Williams b Walsh 20 (68min, 74 balls, 4 fours)	11
*B C Lara c Thorpe b Croft 93 (250min, 201 balls, 2 sixes, 13 fours)	93	M A Butcher b Bishop 20 (64min, 42 balls, 1 four)	11
S Chanderpaul c Thorpe b Fraser 118 (355min, 253 balls, 1 six, 15 fours)	118	N Hussain c D Williams b Walsh 11 (37min, 70 balls, 1 six, 4 fours)	11
C L Hooper c Croft b Headley 43 (141min, 70 balls, 1 six, 4 fours)	43	G P Thorpe c D Williams b Ramnarine 10 (27min, 44 balls, 1 four)	10
J C Adams b Walsh 26 (100min, 78 balls, 2 fours)	26	M R Ramprakash not out 64 (118min, 91 balls, 4 fours)	64
Y D Williams c Croft b Headley 10 (17min, 15 balls)	10	R C Russell b Ramnarine 0 (8min, 4 balls)	0
I R Bishop c Butcher b Croft 14 (34min, 64 balls, 2 fours)	14	R D B Croft c Lara b Hooper 28 (118min, 91 balls, 4 fours)	28
C E L Ambrose c Headley b Tufnell 0 (7min, 6 balls)	0	D W Headley c D Williams b Hooper 0 (8min, 4 balls)	0
C A Walsh not out 3 (8min, 9 balls)	3	A R C Fraser c Lara b Ramnarine 0 (8min, 5 balls)	0
D Ramnarine c Russell b Croft 0 (8min, 2 balls)	0	P C R Tufnell c Bishop b Ambrose 2 (33min, 31 balls)	2
Extras (b 4, lb 14, nb 12) 30	30	Extras (b 10, lb 2, nb 14) 26	26
Total (128.1 overs, 564mins) 382	382	Total (87.1 overs, 377mins) 170	170

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-16 (Campbell 0), 2-38 (Lara 6), 3-127 (Chanderpaul 93), 4-205 (Williams 13), 5-316 (Lara 10), 6-320 (Adams 14), 7-347 (Bishop 14), 8-352 (Walsh 0).
BOWLING: Headley 31-7-90-3 (nb 2); 2-14-0, 10-10-0, 9-3-20-1; Fraser 33-8-77-2 (nb 3); 9-10-0, 5-1-10-1, 9-4-18-0.

Mushtaq has South Africa in a spin

KINGSMEAD (fourth day of five): South Africa, with two second-innings wickets in hand, need 69 runs to beat Pakistan.

WHETHER the South Africa batsmen looked to play from the crease, used their feet or resorted to reverse sweeping, countering Mushtaq Ahmed was quite beyond them yesterday. On a pitch assisting his leg-spin, he took six wickets to give Pakistan an excellent chance of winning this second Test match.

Pakistan have to contend with a ninth-wicket partnership between Boucher and de Villiers that, thus far, has realised 53 runs. Well though they played, Mushtaq had tried by the final session, the fight was sufficiently poor to prevent Aamir Sohail from using his fast bowlers and, in the context of the match, a further 69 runs will be a considerable task for the last two wickets.

FROM IVO TENNANT IN DURBAN

a forecast of rain for today. Or, at least, Mushtaq does. No batsman could read his goosy and his top-spinner was markedly effective. Above all, he bowled few loose balls. His appealing was histrionic, but that has been a part of his country's cricket for many years.

The two remaining Pakistan batsmen both fell at the start of the day, Mushtaq running himself out and Pollock talking his sixth wicket by having Fazl-e-Akbar caught at mid-on. South Africa were left needing to make 253 to win, not quite the highest score of the match, but a tall order on a pitch that had lost its moisture and was taking spin.

For the most part, they did not bat well. Bacher went leg before in Fazl's first over, badly misjudging the line. When, straight after lunch, Mushtaq had Kirsten caught off pad and bat at silly point, it was his 150th Test wicket in only his 36th match. He then had Kallis hit particularly well by Moïn Khan off the full face of the bat down the leg side and Ackerman leg-before on the back foot.

Hudson drove a rare flighted ball to mid-off and Pollock, who tried to hit Mushtaq off his length, was stumped going down the pitch, unable to turn an attempted drive into a late cut. Khuseer was beaten by one that spun back at him. Cronje was caught at the wicket top-edging a hook at a bounce from Wagner Yarnis. Boucher, who is orthodox, and de Villiers, who is not, then kept Pakistan in the field for longer than expected.

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Doull enjoys home comforts

EDEN PARK (third day of five): New Zealand beat Zimbabwe by an innings and 13 runs.

NEW ZEALAND completed their fourth successive home Test win by beating Zimbabwe by an innings and 13 runs on the third day of the second Test in Auckland, on Saturday.

New Zealand took a 2-0 lead in the series when Simon Doull claimed the final two wickets in the last over of the day after Stephen Fleming, the New Zealand captain, had taken the extra half-hour.

At first, the move appeared to be futile as Paul Strang and Adam Huckle took 43 runs off a tiring New Zealand attack. However, Doull was finally rewarded when he bowled Huckle with a yorker with the third ball of the last over and then had Mpuemelelo Mbangwa caught at first slip next ball. Doull finished with four for 50 to give him eight wickets for the match as Zimbabwe were dismissed for 277.

Trailing by 290 runs after the first innings, Zimbabwe had looked likely to take the game into a fourth day when Andy Flower was batting stylishly in the afternoon. He had made 83 and was poised for his fifth Test century when he was caught behind.

Scott Prestwidge, of Queensland, guided his team to victory over New South Wales with a fighting innings of 42 not out in the final of Australia's limited-overs competition yesterday. Prestwidge shared a 55-run stand with Andy Bichel for the eighth wicket after Queensland slumped to 104 for seven chasing the New South Wales total of 166. Earlier, Prestwidge and Bichel each took three for 25.

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O'Sullivan eyes another title

FAR from assuaging Ronnie O'Sullivan's appetite for success, an extended winning sequence serves to fuel it. That became apparent at the Regal Scottish Open and has again been evident from his attitude in the Liverpool Victoria Charity Challenge at Derby.

O'Sullivan lengthened his latest unbeaten sequence to nine matches on Saturday with a 6-4 victory over Stephen Hendry in the semi-finals. The Scot, undoubtedly handicapped when a cue-tip gradually detached itself from the brass ferrule, now holds only one title — the Benson — and one Irish Masters. Hendry, defeated 9-5 by O'Sullivan in the Scottish Open final eight days ago, accounted solidly for the opening two frames yesterday with breaks of 79 and 85 before

winning the fourth on the pink to lead 3-1 at the mid-session interval. Breaks of 62 and 98 carried O'Sullivan to level terms at 3-3, though, and he produced a well-crafted 67 clearance, from 51 points adrift, to steal the seventh on the pink.

Higgins was relieved to avoid a 5-3 deficit when he took the eighth frame with a run of 64 after O'Sullivan jawed a simple yellow.

O'Sullivan was thus, left requiring five of the remaining nine frames to win his fourth tournament of the 1997-98 campaign, guarantee a £100,000 donation for the Muscular Dystrophy Group and collect a £30,000 first prize. The same frame equation applied to Higgins, who is representing the British Institute for Brain Injured Children.

Garcia strikes twice to shake off Koreans

ENGLAND'S performances in their two opening games in the six nations Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Ipoh, Malaysia, have lifted their hopes of a successful World Cup campaign in Holland in May.

Yesterday, they showed much courage and enterprise in beating South Korea 2-1 in an exciting game, only poor finishing denying them a bigger win.

Russell Garcia caused havoc in the Korean defence and, in the absence of Calum Gilles, assumed responsibility for penalty corners. Garcia opened the scoring after Takher had won a penalty corner in the seventeenth minute and struck again 14 minutes later after a great run

Spaniards put paid to Slough again

CLUB de Campo ended Slough's hopes of winning the bronze medal when they beat the English champions in the play-off for a second year running in the European indoor clubs championship in Rueselsheim, Germany yesterday.

Four goals by Britta Becker, the local heroine, steered Rueselsheim, the holders, to their fifth successive title when they beat Eintracht Frankfurt 7-4 in the final.

Missing Karen Brown, who was out with a hamstring injury, Slough lost 5-3 after twice fighting back to equalise through Jane Smith and Mandy Nicholls, the captain. Two quick goals after the restart put the Spaniards 4-2

Rowing: Cambridge keep Story in reserve

CAMBRIDGE impressed on-lookers with two efficient wins over a crew of London Rowing Club lightweighters, all Great Britain squad men, on Saturday. Robin Williams, the Cambridge coach, changed his crew line-up, coxswains included, for two contests from Putney to Hammersmith and won both with three-length margins.

He did not use Alex Story, the Great Britain international, in either, leaving him in the reserves while he tried Richard Stokes and David Cassidy in the first group.

With Stokes at stroke for the first race and with Cassidy brought in at No 2 for the second, Williams considered that the fixture was "up to expectations" and used it to try alternatives in the event of any recurrence of Story's earlier back problems. Story was back in the top crew for his training sessions yesterday.

Hockey: England men on target, but women's club side misses out

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FROM SYDNEY FRISKIN IN IPOH, MALAYSIA

BY CATHY HARRIS

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FROM SYDNEY FRISKIN IN IPOH, MALAYSIA

BY CATHY HARRIS

FA Carling Premiership: Frenchman inspires narrow win against fellow strugglers

Tottenham's burden lifted by Ginola



TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR 1 BOLTON WANDERERS 0 By Oliver Holt Football Correspondent

LIKE a metalworker slowly unwinding the jaws of a vice, David Ginola began to ease Tottenham Hotspur away from the cold grip of relegation at White Hart Lane last night when he inspired his struggling side to a narrow victory that moved them five precious points clear of the drop zone.

Condemned by so many for so long as a luxury player that Spurs can ill-afford in their time of trouble, written off as a man who has not got the stomach for the fight, the Frenchman responded with a performance of wonderful poise and artistry that did much to bring about the downfall of Bolton Wanderers, Tottenham's fellow travellers on the rocky relegation road.

It needed a breathtaking fingertip save from Spurs' young Norwegian goalkeeper, Espen Baardsen, 15 minutes from the final whistle to ensure victory for the North London club. But it was Ginola who had pulled and teased Bolton towards their twelfth successive match without a win and created the goal that left them deep in trouble.

It came on the stroke of half-time. Ginola, who was shadowed by Fairclough throughout the match, received the ball midway inside his own half on the Tottenham right touchline. He changed direction and set off towards the centre circle, eluding Fairclough's lunge, as he went and then threading a beautifully weighted ball out to Wilson on the left wing.

Wilson ran forward and played a



Nielsen dispatches the shot that gave Tottenham victory over Bolton into the corner of the net at White Hart Lane yesterday. Photograph: Marc Aspland

short ball in to Nielsen, who was lurking on the edge of the Bolton penalty area. The Dane's first touch took him beyond the static Todd and, with his second he struck a mis-hit shot that bobbed across Branagan and sneaked in off the far post. As Nielsen celebrated wildly, Ginola took the applause.

Tottenham were lucky to have reached that stage on level terms.

In the second minute, Holdsworth had stolen in between Wilson and Calderwood and tapped the ball past Baardsen, who caught him on the foot as he went through and sent him tumbling to the floor just inside the area. "It was a penalty," the Tottenham manager, Christian Gross, said dismally after the game, but the referee, Peter Jones, did not give it.

Rerieved, Spurs should have taken the lead themselves midway through the half when a strong run by Carr, a neat dummy by Bert and a sharp pass from Carr freed Armstrong, who was later carried off with a thigh injury, on the left side of the Bolton area. His first touch let him down and forced him to hurry his shot.

Ten minutes before the interval,

Tottenham went close again. This time, Bolton, who were disappointingly sterile in midfield and attack, tried to create a chance for their opponents instead. Pollock sliced an attempted clearance spiralling into the air above his own area. Branagan dropped the ball as it fell, under pressure from Campbell, but Klinsmann could not keep it low enough.

In the second half, Ginola continued to run the game, charging at the Bolton defence with speed and impudence. Only the finish was lacking. One effort, in the 59th minute, bobbed just before he hit it and ended up in the second tier of the stand. In the 68th minute, Spurs nearly increased their lead. Bert, who had an excellent game anchoring the

midfield with an economy of style that is the antithesis of Ginola's more flamboyant approach, slipped a simple pass through to Fox, who took it on to the edge of the area and struck a fierce drive that Branagan did well to push wide. Nine minutes after that, though, Baardsen produced a save that put Branagan's in the shade. The ball bobbed about on the edge of the Spurs area and, when it spun off the heel of Frandsen, Phillips hit a first-time shot that seemed to be curling towards the corner of the net.

But Baardsen flung himself to his left as though he had jets on his feet and pushed the ball round the post. When the replay was shown on the giant screen at the stadium, it brought gasps of astonishment from the crowd.

Ginola received a standing ovation when he made way for Moussa Saib, Tottenham's new £2.3 million signing from Valencia, four minutes from the end. Even in the brief but assured appearance of the Algerian, who had a firm shot saved by Branagan before the end, there seemed to be more promise of a continuing Tottenham revival in the ten games that they have left, even if there was another injury blow when it was revealed that David Howells had broken a rib.

"Sometimes I would prefer it if David did simple things," Gross said somewhat ungratefully after the match. "He is always looking for the final solution and I have told him he should sometimes play the shorter pass."

"But he is very important to us. It was a big win for us tonight, but we still have ten very hard games to go. As long as we keep our spirit and keep fighting for Tottenham Hotspur, we will be all right."

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (4-3-1-2) E Baardsen - R Cox, N Aueron - D Ginola (sub: M Saib, 80min) - C Armstrong (sub: D Howells, 54) J. Nielsen BOLTON WANDERERS (4-1-3-2) K Branagan - N Cox, G Bergerson, A Todd, J Phillips - C Fairclough (sub: M Jones, 60), P Frandsen (sub: A Gunnlaugsson, 69), P Frandsen, A Thompson - D Holdsworth, N Blake. Referee: P Jones.

Marcelle epitomises the new Barnsley

REMINDERS were all around. Outside a buoyant Oakwell, bootleggers sold T-shirts commemorating the FA Cup win against Manchester United. The match programme was crammed with dizzy reflections of last Wednesday night. Wimbledon simply inhaled the celebratory air, curled their lips and set about pooping the party.

For once, though, they met their match and Barnsley underlined their progress since the formative, naive days in the FA Carling Premiership by emerging from a physical, often frantic contest with three points. John Dennis, the chairman, said: "It is a long time since I had to look at the table to check our position."

They were off the bottom row, for the first time in nearly three months. True, they rode a difficult period towards the end of the first half, when Jones and Euell squandered good chances, and later allowed the visitors to retrieve a goal, when Euell met Cunningham's cross with a free header - yet, otherwise, Moses and Morgan denied everything that Wimbledon threw at them.

In its own way, victory was more impressive than that against United. "Sometimes it is easier to defend against the so-called top clubs because they keep the ball in midfield and wait for the moment to break," John Age Ejlertoff, scorer of both Barnsley goals, said. "Against Wimbledon, everything goes into the danger area quickly. Nobody epitomised Barnsley's willingness to scrap more than

Climt Marcelle. At 5ft 4in tall and with a shirt flapping around his knees, he resembled a matchstick man in this growing, muscular company, but he refused to be blown away. When, after 61 minutes, Jones curtailed a run through midfield with an assassin's tackle, Marcelle rose gingerly, dusted his thighs - and, within a minute, created one of the most extraordinary goals of the season.

His shoulder-to-shoulder challenge with Sullivan surprised the keeper to such an extent that he dropped the ball. Ejlertoff slid in as Sullivan tried forlornly to reclaim it and a second contact sent the ball trickling over the line.

"Usually I do not go in for balls like that, but it was a battle and I was flying," Marcelle said. Earlier, he had telephoned Brian Lara, a former colleague in the Trinidad and Tobago youth football team, to issue a friendly reprimand for his failure to complete a first innings century in the Test match in Guyana. Lara was already aware of Barnsley's win against United.

Marcelle relished his role behind the strikers. He produced a diving save from Sullivan in the 31st minute with a curling, left-foot shot, this six minutes after helping a through ball from Easden into the path of Ejlertoff, who chipped it deftly over Sullivan. Underestimate Barnsley at your peril. BARNLEY (3-4-1-2): D Johnson - P Meredith, A Moses, C Morgan - N Easden, J Ejlertoff (sub: D Johnson, 60), M Edwards, D Barrow - C Marcelle - A Ward, J Egan. WIMBLEDON (4-4-2): G Robinson - K Cunningham, C Perry, D Blackwell, B Thatcher - M Ardley, M Hughes, Jones, S Castellano (sub: M Gayle, 67) - C Ledbury, J East. Referee: G Barber.

Sutton's masterclass puts Rovers back on right track

TYPICAL. A sprinkling of white stuff on the Pennines and the British Rail network in the north of England shudders to a halt. No surprise there, then, but how to explain the paralysis that subsequently gripped the defences at Ewood Park? The wrong kind of snow must have been falling, for there had been nothing to suggest this avalanche of goals.

Those still sprinting to the ground ten minutes after kick-off could have been forgiven for thinking that they had already missed the decisive moment when they heard the roar that greeted Martin Dahlin's opener for Blackburn Rovers. Leicester City, after all, had started the day with only Manchester United ahead of them in the miserable stakes, while Rovers' indifferent recent form promised anything other than a goal feast. They need not have worried: they had reckoned without Chris Sutton. And so, it seems, must England.

There can be surely only two camps of opinion over the celebratory Sutton affair. There will be those who view his decision not to play for England B against Chile last month as arrogance. And there will be those who will say that he is just plain wrong, that as good as he is, he cannot dictate where and when he should play for his country. But that Sutton has talent is not in doubt, nor the fact that he is in prime form.

His hat-trick on Saturday, each goal taken with increasing aplomb from increasing distance, was a masterclass in the art of finishing. It took his tally of FA Carling Premiership goals to 16, the best in the country, and his overall total to 19. "I cannot see any better centre forward in the country at the moment," Dahlin said. Nor, presumably, can Sutton himself, who was in "I made my



BLACKBURN ROVERS 5 LEICESTER CITY 3 By Keith Pike

decision and I am sticking by it" mood. He insisted that he had never said he did not want to play for England, only that a B game represented a "hiding to nothing". He added: "You don't have to be a genius to work out that I haven't done my chances any good. People will say I was rash, but it wasn't an easy decision or one that I was happy to make."

"You have to do what you think is right. I want to play for England, but I am realistic enough to know that, after the conversation I had with Glenn Hoddle, that is very unlikely to happen. I can't see anything changing."

With Fowler now out of the World Cup reckoning and severe doubts over the form or fitness of Wright, Ferdinand and Collymore, the England coach might have been tempted to rustle up an olive branch had he been at Ewood Park. Sutton's all-round play was nothing short of sensational as Rovers romped into a 5-0 lead with little more than an hour gone. Leicester were looking at a humili-

ation rather than simply a hiding and one glorious Rovers attack illustrated the pace, power and precision sweeping them aside. Hendry started it, hemmed in as he was by his own corner flag, a drop-back making space for a pass that Sutton, with wonderful vision, headed into Sherwood's path. The ball was quickly moved on to Dahlin, whose early shot flew wide of Keller's right-hand post. Goal of the season was put a couple of feet away.

But come the goals did. Sutton's unselfish, cushioned header set up Dahlin's goal, and his own first was the result of an impudent backheel from Duff's low right-wing cross in a crowded goalmouth. His next, on the stroke of half-time, came after one touch to control Filicic's cross and an unstoppable shot on the turn. The Leicester defence, on this occasion, chose not to mark him. Oops.

The best of an impressive bunch arrived three minutes after the break. A right-wing cross flicked off Savage's head to put Sutton in possession on the corner of the area and a look up revealed that all his colleagues were marked. No option? No problem. Spotting Keller fractionally off his line, his curling, chipped shot arced mesmerically over the goalkeeper and dipped under the crossbar.

After Hendry had rifled the fifth, Leicester's reply - three goals in nine bizarre minutes through Wilson, Izet and Ullathorne - took the gloss off the afternoon for Rovers. This, though, was Sutton's day: is there time yet for this to be his, and England's, summer?

BLACKBURN ROVERS (4-4-2): A Fene - J Kerne, S Horroch (sub: M Broome, 46min), G Hendry (sub: D Duff, G Parrott, T Sherwood, J Wilson - M Duff (sub: L Bohner, 72) C Sutton. LEICESTER CITY (3-5-2): K Healy - S Price (sub: R Ullathorne, 21), M Elliot, S Walsh - R Savage, T Zogras, M Lervin, M Izet, S Guppy - E Hendry, G Fenton (sub: S Wilson, 62). Referee: N Barry.

Shearer struggles to rebuild the legend

IN THE sleet and hail that preceded this match, a young boy was dragged down Clady Street by his father, his tear-stained face distorted by a wail that made the supporters milling around look up with a start. "D'ya think he knows something we don't," one said, with a rueful smile.

If the child's protests were a small rebellion against watching this match, then his youthful instinct proved uncannily correct. Even Howard Kendall, the Everton manager, responded to the laughter that coincided with his entrance into the press-room after the match, by saying: "I suppose you've got to find some entertainment from somewhere."

The home team did not manage one shot on target and Newcastle United were not much better. Despite a dominance in terms of possession that saw them camped in their opponents' half, only Andersson, with a close-range effort, and Lee, from distance, stung Myhre's hands in the Everton goal.

It wasn't so much a poor game as a bankrupt one, and yet Newcastle created enough chances to have won comfortably, but for the profanity of one of their forwards. His identity? Whisper it quietly in the footballing halls of fame, but it was a certain Alan Shearer. On three occasions, he was presented with scoring opportunities at the far post that the real Shearer would have buried. At Goodison, an imposter was wearing his jersey. The great man may have recovered his fitness after a debilitating ankle injury, but his

sharpness in front of goal has yet to return. Do not get too carried away, because the movement of the ball and typically physical approach in leading the line suggested that he is not far away from the sort of form that has made him a legend in his own injury-time. The fact is, though, that Shearer is going through the sort of barren patch that plagued him for 14 matches for England. Terry Venables stuck by him, but if Glenn Hoddle's treatment of Robbie Fowler is anything to go by, we can not be sure that he will get the same understanding this time.

Shearer spurned three chances in his last match, against Leeds United, and repeated the unlikely trick here. His first miss after 17 minutes was the worst, a cross from Batty finding him in space at the far post, but Shearer shot across the face of what was an inviting goal.

"It's not been ideal for him really - he had to come back earlier than he should have done because of our predicament," Kenny Dalglish, the Newcastle manager, said afterwards. "He hasn't really had the chance for a full week's training, but he'll be alright. As far as we are concerned - and England - he is further on than we anticipated. He'll be ready for the summer."

EVERTON (3-5-2): T Myhre - M Ward (sub: G Southgate, R Scowen - S Grayson, J Taylor, L Hendrie, A Wright - J Joachim, D York, S Collymore (sub: D Byfield, 78min). NEWCASTLE UNITED (4-4-2): S Geven - W Barton, S Hooey, P Abbott, S Preece - K Campbell (sub: J Koroza, 64), R Lee, D Batty, G Speed - A Shearer, A Anderson. Referee: M Riley.

Collymore marks Little's departure by raising a sweat



ON TUESDAY last week, John Gregory, the manager of Wycombe Wanderers, was contemplating fixtures against Gillingham, York City and Luton Town in the Nationwide League second division. A day later, as the new manager of Aston Villa, he was digesting the prospect of Liverpool, Atletico Madrid and Chelsea, a UEFA Cup quarter-final first leg sandwiched between matches in the FA Carling Premiership. Such is the nature of football. It is a sport that can chew up Brian Little - a good, decent man - and spit him out in a fit of pique; a sport that drove the former Villa manager to the brink and beyond, his resignation but a final expression of exasperation. It is a sport that can also elevate Gregory, a rookie failure with Portsmouth and a second-year

apprentice going nowhere fast with Wycombe, to the multimillion-pound heights in England and Europe. A sport that will laud him, even deify him, before plunging the knife. Probably from behind, too. At Villa Park on Saturday, Doug Ellis, the septuagenarian Villa chairman, welcomed his latest claret-and-blue saviour. That he had shown the door to seven of the nine previous custodians of the job was temporarily forgotten and, anyway, Ellis was to be applauded, surely, for his bold approach. Instead of opting for the usual stale suspects - Venables, Francis G. Rioch et al - he went for Gregory, 43, a favoured son, former Villa player and Little coach. And Gregory made an impressive start, this hard-earned victory possibly banishing Villa's gnawing fears of being dragged into the

relegation mire and certainly ending Liverpool's hopes of challenging Manchester United for the Premiership crown. It was a timely fillip, too, for the pressing engagement in the Estadio Vicente Calderon in Spain tomorrow. An adventurous 3-4-3 system worked effectively in spells, particularly when Villa moved forward, yet barely disguised all their ills. If the defence is again hesitant and generous in Madrid, the second leg will swiftly become an academic exercise. Still, it was encouraging. "That's

the easy bit done," Gregory said. "Everyone was fired up, which often happens when a new manager takes over. Now comes the hard bit, keeping it going. Standards have been set. None more so than by Stan Collymore, the magnificent or moody, silky or surly striker of whom so many analyses have been written without unscrabbling what makes him tick. In modern parlance, Collymore was up for it. He cancelled out Owen's opening penalty, given for Bosnich's trip on Leighton, and

with a half-struck shot that was deflected past Friedel. His second goal, a tap-in in the 65th minute, followed Taylor's low shot against a post. He could have been sent off for his role in several niggly incidents had not Graham Poll, the referee, shown his more lenient side. "Stan went around doing what he wanted," Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, said. "Nothing malicious, just a series of fouls." At least he grafted, got involved and generated sweat - responses that might have prevented the endlessly patient Little, overwhelmed by frustration and emotion, from rushing headlong into unemployment. "That is the type of performance I will now judge Stan by," Gregory said. "Anything lower than that and I will be disappointed."

A renowned disciplinarian, Gregory will not muck about. At Wycombe, he fined players for walking around barefooted; on his arrival at Villa, he dismissed Allan Evans, assistant manager at the club, the day after that he said he wanted him to stay. Collymore has scored only seven goals in 33 appearances - at roughly £1 million each - since leaving Liverpool last summer, a fact placed in perfect context by a wary Midlands scribe. "His display was not a salute to Brian Little, it was an insult," he said. Gregory should remember that. ASTON VILLA (3-4-3): T Myhre - U Boshuijzen, G Southgate, R Scowen - S Grayson, J Taylor, L Hendrie, A Wright - J Joachim, D York, S Collymore (sub: D Byfield, 78min). LIVERPOOL (4-4-2): S Geven - W Barton, S Hooey, P Abbott, S Preece - K Campbell (sub: J Koroza, 64), R Lee, D Batty, G Speed - A Shearer, A Anderson. Referee: G Poul.

Nationwide League: Middlesbrough lose place at top as stalemate leaves local rivals at the bottom

Van Hooijdonk proves worth to Forest Potteries clubs show signs of fragile future

Nottingham Forest 4
Middlesbrough 0
BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

WHEN Pierre van Hooijdonk, the Holland striker, was trying to negotiate a wage rise from his employers at Celtic, he did not endear himself to the street dwellers of Glasgow when he infamously commented that £7,000 a week might be adequate for the homeless, but was not sufficient for a player of international calibre.

Van Hooijdonk could not prevent Forest from plunging out of the FA Carling Premiership, but, a year on, he is plundering the defences of the Nationwide League first division as if they barely exist. He was at it again yesterday, scoring twice against Middlesbrough at the City Ground, to take his tally for the season to 28, as Forest leaptfrogged their title rivals and returned to the top of the division on goals scored.

The 6ft 4in Dutchman may have a monster ego and, at times, he looks positively awkward, a gangly figure almost falling over himself as he struggles to control the simplest of passes. Yet give him the merest hint of a chance and he becomes one of the most serene strikers of a ball in the English game.

"It's what we've come to expect from him," Dave Bassett, the Forest manager, said. "He's shown what he's capable of time and time again and he's now more consistent than he used to be. He's probably a bit more relaxed because he now realises he should be going to the World Cup with Holland."

"I think it preyed on his mind at first, dropping into the first division, but he now sees that it's not going to affect his international career and he's all the better for it. He's a bit different from other forwards and always gives us the presence that you need."

Van Hooijdonk had not played in Forest's previous two matches, which, signifi-



Stone rushes to congratulate Campbell, the Forest striker, on scoring their side's second goal yesterday. Photograph: Ross Kinnaid / Allsport

cantly they drew against the lesser lights of Stoke City and Tranmere Rovers. He was otherwise engaged in Holland's two World Cup warm-up matches in the United States, in which he was used as a substitute. He returned only on Thursday, but showed no ill effects from his transatlantic rigours.

He quickly tested Dibble, the Middlesbrough goalkeeper, with a swirling 35-yard shot that enveloped a scrappy, often tepid, first half. Dibble did well to push it away and performed similar acrobatics

early in the second half, when Van Hooijdonk unleashed another of his long-range specials. On the third occasion, though, in the 53rd minute, he was left stranded as a clearly struck, 30-yard effort sailed past him.

Middlesbrough's seventh-match unbeaten run was abruptly ended by Forest's renewed confidence and their own inability to cope with incisive attacking of the highest quality. Stone, Johnson and Gemmill supplied the ammunition from midfield and Van Hooijdonk and

Campbell fired it in short, sharp bursts. Campbell scored the second goal, his fourteenth of the season, after Van Hooijdonk's pass had sent him scurrying through with only Dibble to beat, which he did almost casually.

Cooper added a third, nodding in after Bart-Williams' corner had caused panic in the area, and Middlesbrough's heaviest defeat of the season was confirmed eight minutes from the end when Van Hooijdonk rattled in a penalty, after Pearson had up-ended Stone.

Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, conceded that the passing and workrate of his players had been below par. "Good teams bounce back from this sort of display and we'll do just that in our next match against Queens Park Rangers," he said.

Yet his criticism of Eddie Wolstenholme, the referee, for awarding Forest so many free kicks in goalkeeping positions was ridiculously wide of the mark. "We talked about not giving away free kicks in dark places, but the ref gave us nothing and gave them

everything," he said. "Van Hooijdonk and Campbell were all over Festa and Pearson, our lads at the back, but it was always them that got the decisions. I spoke to the ref afterwards and said I'd love to invite him to Teesside for a game. He was such a homer."

NOTTINGHAM FOREST (4-4-2): D Bassett — D Lyda, C Cooper, S Christie, A Rogers — S Stone (sub: T Bostwell, 55min), A Johnson, S Gemmill, C Bart-Williams — P van Hooijdonk, K Campbell. MIDDLESBROUGH (4-4-2): A Dibble — V Fowler (sub: A Connors 67), N Pearson, G Fodda, C Fleming — N Madisson, M Thomas, R Maslow, C Hignett — P Menson, M Brown (sub: A Armstrong 67). Referee: E Wolstenholme.

Port Vale 0
Stoke City 0
BY DAVID MADDOCK

SEARCHING for an apt description of this dreadful encounter, John Rudge, the Port Vale manager, arrived at "a titanic struggle". It was appropriate, if only in the sense that — even in Hollywood's glamorous new blockbuster — the ship goes down.

These are desperate times for football in the Potteries. With Vale still anchored to the bottom of Nationwide League first division after this soulless draw and Stoke City, their neighbours, just a place above them, the spectre of relegation appears to be haunting both clubs.

Between them, they have won just three matches in their past 40. "It is a dreadful run and if we are going to escape then we will have to find a little more quality," Rudge said. "It was what you would call a dull game." Vale were seventh in the table in October, but just two wins in 20 games since then have undermined their position and confidence.

In truth, they offered what little quality was on display, which is not actually saying very much. On a pitch described as "a ploughed field" by Chris Kamara, the Stoke manager, only Bogie in the Vale midfield ever suggested that he saw the ball as anything other than a ticking bomb, waiting to explode in his face.

Jansson, on the left flank, had perhaps the two best chances of the match for Vale, the first after two minutes, when he seized on a block by Sigurdsson but steered his shot from close range wide of the post. Deep into the second half, the winger smashed a drive from 23 yards inches wide of Southall's post.

In between, the goalkeeper, who was making his debut on loan from Everton, had little to

do. In fact, the only real entertainment came from the series of disputes to be expected in a derby between two sides in such precarious positions. Three players — Tankard, Hill and Wallace — were booked after a mad scramble of pushing and shoving that seemed to involve virtually every player on the pitch.

Even more remarkable was an incident midway through the first half, when Jansson was knocked down by Pickering. When the referee failed to deliver justice, the Vale player simply picked himself up off the mud and launched a passable karate-style kick at his opponent. Inexplicably, Peter Rejer, the official, failed to spot that either.

Stoke, for their part, managed only a smart, instinctive shot in the 64th minute from Thorne, who reacted first to a blocked effort by Kavanagh. Van Heusden, in the Vale goal, was equal to the task.

Things look grim for both teams — they are both below Manchester City, for goodness sake — but Kamara, who kept Bradford City afloat last season, refused to offer a pessimistic note afterwards, even though his side have not won in eight matches since he assumed control. "I know we'll get out of this," he said. "I was in this situation last season and I know what it takes to survive."

At least Kamara did have the good grace to admit that the contest was substandard fare. "If you had paid money to watch, then it must have been a bit disappointing," he said sheepishly. A fate, in fact, that befell those who visited the cinema to watch Titanic — and with the same outcome, perhaps.

PORT VALE (4-4-2): A Van Heusden — M Corbridge, A H D Jones, A Price (sub: M Spinks, 55min) — S Anwarth, A Forde, J Bogie, J Jansson — M Foye, L Hills (sub: A Hays 57). STOKES CITY (5-3-2): N Southall — A Pickering, J Whittle, L Sigurdsson, S Tweed (sub: G Crow, 75), D Thelwell, K Kavanagh, R Forsyth, R Wallace — K Lightbourne, P Thorne. Referee: P Rejer.

Beardsley provides path towards safety

Manchester City 1
West Bromwich Albion 0
BY BILL EDGAR

THE apparently sinking ship that is Manchester City has become a liferaft for Peter Beardsley. Somehow mysteriously, the former England forward has been thrown overboard by both Newcastle United and Bolton Wanderers in the past six months, the latter allowing him to join City on loan, but on this evidence, a rejuvenated Beardsley may be the man to steer City clear of relegation to the uncharted waters of the Nationwide League second division.

It was Frank Clark, recently sacked as City manager, who brought in Beardsley, but his successor, Joe Royle, is also an admirer. "I thought Peter Beardsley gave us glimpses of real class today. He still sees a pass as well as anybody," Royle said.

Twice Lee Bradbury spurned chances created by astute passes from Beardsley. Uwe Rösler, whose 43rd-minute volleyed goal gave City a deserved win, also went close after a move in which Beardsley contributed a brilliant first-time pass to Lee Briscoe and a clever one-two with Michael Brown.

Victory in each of the three games remaining before his scheduled return to Bolton would almost guarantee survival for City, even if they sell Georgi Kinkladze, The Georgian, who is injured, is report-

edly keen to move to Liverpool. But if Beardsley, at 37, carries City's immediate hopes, then Brown and Jeff Whitley are two potential long-term solutions for a club that won its last trophy in 1976, before the pair were born. Brown was an impressive midfielder ball-winner while Whitley, a 19-year-old Northern Ireland international, made several fine runs and crosses from right wing-back.

Royle also had in mind Whitley's 22-year-old brother, Jim, when he said: "The three kids have done ever so well since I got here." Denis Smith might struggle to name three players who have done well for him since he became West Bromwich Albion manager on Christmas Eve last year. A slump that began a month before his arrival has seen West Bromwich slip from top to mid-table by winning just 12 points from 17 games.

Last week, he heard "Smith out" chants — even a City manager would expect longer than two months to find his feet — but he remains defiant. "Wherever I've been, I've won something and I'm determined to do it again," Smith, who has gained promotion for York City, Sunderland and Oxford United, said.

MANCHESTER CITY (3-4-1-2): T Wright — K Syman, G Walters, K Takoudas — Jeff Whitley, M Brown, Jim Whitley (sub: P Beardsley, 55min), Uwe Rösler, Lee Bradbury, Michael Brown. WEST BROMWICH ALBION (4-5-1): A Miller — P Whorwood, D Burns, M Gordon, S Foster, Quinn (sub: B Quinlan, 77), S Colebrook (sub: S Flynn, 88), P B. Hamilton (sub: D Gilbert, 86), M Adams — R Taylor. Referee: A Butler.

Francis has the last laugh as Birmingham battle back

Wolverhampton W 1
Birmingham City 3
BY MEL WEBB

THEY had a remarkable FA Cup replay victory in midweek, so Wolverhampton Wanderers were sure to be in prime form for this one. Wrong. Birmingham City, on the other hand, came to Molineux having subsided to a Nationwide League first division defeat at home by Bury on Wednesday, so they would take some reviving. Wrong again. Wolves wanted Birmingham, blossomed. Somewhere, somehow, the plot went horribly wrong.

It should never have happened. Wolves took the lead in the opening 15 minutes, looked immeasurably the better side for half an hour and competed in some areas throughout. They were, for instance, superior to Birmingham in midfield from first to last and created enough openings to have got something from the game.

The sad facts revealed on the other side of the coin were less pleasing to a team with promotion ambitions. Wolves were naive in defence and haphazard in their finishing. A modicum of tightness at the back and the acceptance of no more than half of the chances the creative department made for them would have brought a comfortable victory with something to spare.

Birmingham were not complaining about their neighbours'

shortcomings. They are a coolly pragmatic outfit moulded in the image of their manager. Trevor Francis is a man who deals in practicalities; if there is a game to be won and, further, if it is being offered on a platter, he expects his charges to take their chances, offer polite thanks and go on their way rejoicing.

Birmingham moved into sixth place in the table with this victory, while Wolves remain resolutely outside the play-off zone. If Mark McGhee, their manager, cannot find a way to stem his men's profligacy at front and rear, that is where they will stay. McGhee was a picture of tightly and admirably controlled fury afterwards. "I can't fault their

commitment or their effort," he said, resorting, po-faced, to a familiar escape route that is the refuge of the angry manager. "But if you don't take your chances you don't deserve to get anything."

Francis was more forthcoming. "The way we came back after the Bury game was very pleasing," he said. "The players were very low, but we managed to pick them up by having a bit of fun in training yesterday. It obviously worked." Birmingham might have been further deflated when Freedman hit a firm, low volley past Stowell in the thirteenth minute after a splendid long, diagonal pass from Naylor.

Wolves were still controlling the game when Ndlovu evaded Curle in the 35th minute and equalised with a low drive. Adebola used his strength to hold off three attempted tackles before scoring from a narrow angle with 20 minutes left and Ndlovu scored from the penalty spot in the 78th minute, after Curle had fouled O'Connor. Wolves must hope that that old dead-eye, Steve Bull, who came on for the last 11 minutes, will soon be fit to start a game. The FA Cup quarter-final at Leeds on Saturday might be just the moment. Goodness knows, Wolves need him.

WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS (4-4-2): M Stowell — K Austin (sub: P Simpson, 75min), D Richards, K Curle, L Naylor — C Robinson, S O'Connor, M Adams, P Ndlovu (sub: S Bull, 79) — D Freedman, M Pashalis. BIRMINGHAM CITY (4-4-2): S Banner — M Johnson, S Brown, G Hignett, S Chester — McCarty, M O'Connor (sub: M Grayson, 80), C Marsden, B Hughes (sub: S Grayson, 80) — P Ndlovu (sub: M Forsyth, 85), D Adebola. Referee: G Coak.

Ndlovu: equaliser

Sunderland stung into action by Reid

Sunderland 2
Ipswich Town 2
BY LYNNE CRITCHLEY

A FLY on the wall in the Sunderland dressing-room at half-time would have buzzed off sharply for fear of being frazzled by Peter Reid's industrial language. Spare a thought, then, for his Sunderland side, who lie third in the Nationwide League first division and who finished the first half on Saturday 2-1 down to Ipswich Town at the Stadium of Light.

Judging from his performance in the BBC documentary Premier Positions, his players will have been on the receiving end of a verbal bashing. "I don't think you could put it down on paper really," Darren Williams, the Sunderland defender, said of the half-time pep talk. Reid was unusually coy on the subject. "I wouldn't like to go into that," he said.

Criticism of his tirade of expletives during the series recounting Sunderland's 1996-97 Premier League season, which ended in relegation, had blunted his humour. He had gone on record during the week to apologise, but assured us it was "nothing that can't be heard in any dressing-room in the country".

Ipswich had taken 19 points from their last 21, amassing 17 goals in their past four games, and Sunderland had scored 12 goals in their past three at home. Expectations were high for a cracking game, full

of open attacking football from the top two form sides of the division. The game lived up to its billing. Even the man in black received praise. "I thought the referee [Mike Jones] had an excellent game," Reid said. Alex Mathie, a former Newcastle United striker, had chatted happily with chip-wielding fans on arriving at the stadium. However, after setting up Bobby Peta for the first Ipswich goal after ten minutes, a swig of lemonade and a swift exit were on the cards afterwards.

Ipswich, who are pressing for a play-off position, fielded three England B internationals from the game against Chile — Wright, Dyer and Scowcroft. They had started briskly and Dyer, a 19-year-old midfielder player, added a second goal after Darren Williams had levelled the score with a header.

Kevin Phillips, who would have gone to Ipswich from Watford earlier in the season if he had managed to raise £100,000 in addition to their £250,000 offer, scored his 22nd goal of the season to equalise in a second half that Sunderland dominated.

"We're a bit disappointed we haven't got the three points," Reid said. He will be especially disappointed that his defence has now conceded seven goals in the past three games.

SUNDERLAND (4-4-2): I Perez — D Holloway, J O'Sullivan, D Williams, M Gray — N Sumner (sub: Paul Gilroy), L Clark, A Rice, A Johnston — N Clark, K Phillips. IPSWICH TOWN (4-4-2): P Wright — M Tarocco, A Howson, J O'Sullivan — M Scowcroft, K Dyer, M Hayward, B Peta (sub: J Scowcroft, 59) — Alex Mathie, D Johnson (sub: D Sowter, 73). Referee: M Jones.

Rovers fail to bridge Watford gap

Watford 3
Bristol Rovers 2
BY NICK SZCZEPANIK

AT THE end of the season, it may be possible to look back on Saturday as the day when Watford and Bristol City finally shook off most of the distant chattering pack to lay lasting claim to the automatic promotion places in the Nationwide League second division.

For Bristol Rovers, in fifth place but 15 points behind their second-placed neighbours, defeat in a richly entertaining game at Vicarage Road means that they are fighting probably for a play-off place.

Their failure to live with Watford in a first half that he described as "men against

boys" was a source of frustration to Ian Holloway, the Rovers player-manager, but he also recognised the qualities his young team had demonstrated in recovering from a two-goal half-time deficit.

"What character and skill we showed," Holloway said. "We got back into it by copying them, being there for every challenge, as we should have in the first half: but we wasted 45 minutes."

In that first period, one spectator, Gerry Francis, the former Rovers and Tottenham Hotspur manager, who signed Holloway twice as a player, must have found the defending reminiscent of his own worst days at White Hart Lane as first Noel-Williams, with a low shot, and then Rosenthal, with a delicate lob, were allowed space to score.

After Holloway's half-time team-talk, things were different. White's deflected shot bounced in off a post and, in the 82nd minute, Cureton equalised from a narrow angle after Chamberlain had saved his underhit penalty, awarded after Millen had brought down Hayes.

A draw, surely. Mooney had other ideas and forced his way past two attempts at a tackle before driving an angled shot past Higgs two minutes from time for Watford's first win in February. Even then, Beadle could have equalised, but he put his header into the side-netting.

Francis left before Mooney's late decider, probably reflecting that his former pupil was doing pretty well as a manager. Graham Taylor, the Watford manager, agreed. "It's not

often I comment on the opposition, but they played well," he said.

"You have to learn from life and at the moment we are not quite winners," Holloway said. "Last season, I had no experience as a manager, only as a player; you've got to learn how to do a job. Last year, we lost 1-0 here and we were dreadful. This year, I'm disappointed that we didn't beat them. We've come an awful long way and we will be a team one day." Next season? "I still think we can do something this year."

WATFORD (2-4-3): A Chamberlain — R Page, R Miles, T Mooney — M Gibbs, S Palmer, R Johnson, C Easton (sub: D Bassett, 70min) — D Foley (sub: S Stone, 83), G Neal-Miller, R Rosenthal. BRISTOL ROVERS (4-4-2): S Higgs — D Pritchard, T White, S Foster, G Power — J Curran, G Parnoo (sub: I Holloway, 67), Scurry, T Ramsay (sub: D Whyte, 59) — P Beadle, S Hayes. Referee: K Leach.

Veterans end County's unbeaten run

Macclesfield Town 2
Notts County 0
BY PAT GIBSON

AH, THE sweet romance of football. Macclesfield Town, the youngest club in the Football League, had just beaten Notts County, the oldest, to enhance their prospects of going straight from the Vauxhall Conference to the Nationwide League second division in successive seasons.

As a crowd of 5,122, their biggest for four years, spilled out of the quaintly named Moss Rose ground, a cry from the home dressing-room split the cold night air: "Do we have to get into the Premiership to get some decent showers? It's a flipping joke." It somehow summed up the

secret of Macclesfield's success. They are on the other side of the tracks from those posh properties that surround them in the leafy lanes of Cheshire and, far from showing off their newly-acquired status, they have simply rolled up their sleeves and got on with the job.

"When we came up from the Conference, the chairman wanted to consolidate and said that if we stayed in the third division, he would be happy," Sammy McIlroy, the Macclesfield manager, said, "but it's a big negative when you start talking about consolidation, because it's as though you just want to hang in there."

"We have taken every game as it's come; we haven't made any predictions and said 'we're going to do this' or 'we're going to do that' and

I'm proud of every one of the players for what they have achieved so far this season."

He has never been prouder of them than he was on Saturday. Notts County arrived with the best record of any side in all four divisions, a run of 16 games without defeat having taken them 16 points clear at the top, and, for much of the first half, they looked capable of becoming the first visiting team to win at Moss Rose for 15 months.

They were without half a dozen regulars, however, through injury or suspension, forcing them to play Farrell, a centre forward, at centre back and include Hughes and Lormor, two loan players, and their deficiencies showed in the second half when Macclesfield deservedly won the game

with goals from two Conference veterans, Askey, 33, and Wood, 34.

Askey was left completely unmarked in the fifth minute and 20 minutes later Howard put Wood through to beat. Politt, with consummate ease.

There might have been more goals for Macclesfield as Notts pushed forward and the champions-elect knew it was not going to be their day when Baradough had a penalty in the 87th minute saved by Price.

MACCLESFIELD TOWN (4-2-1-2): B Prow — D Triggs, F Scoble, S Pugh, N Howard — S Wood, A Askey, J Whittle, J Askey, L Chambers (sub: A Pashalis, 55min). NOTTS COUNTY (4-4-2): M Potts — S Parris, M Robinson, R Richardson — G Parris, A Hughes, P Robinson — Baradough, M Potts (sub: M Scoble, 69), I Baradough — A Lister (sub: C Duffin, 69), G Jones. Referee: P Richards.

MES MONDAY MARCH 2 1998
als at the bottom
tters club
low signs of
agile future

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

CLUB	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Manchester United	20	11	4	5	30	17	26
Liverpool	19	10	5	4	28	16	25
Chelsea	18	9	6	5	26	18	24
Manchester City	17	8	7	5	24	19	23
Blackburn Rovers	16	7	8	5	22	20	22
Sheff Wed	15	7	7	6	21	21	21
Sheff Utd	14	6	8	6	20	22	20
Leeds	13	5	9	6	19	23	19
Crystal Palace	12	5	7	7	18	24	18
Sheff Albion	11	4	8	7	17	25	17
Derby	10	4	7	9	16	26	16
Sheff Albion	9	3	8	9	15	27	15
Sheff Albion	8	3	7	10	14	28	14
Sheff Albion	7	2	8	11	13	29	13
Sheff Albion	6	2	7	12	12	30	12
Sheff Albion	5	1	8	13	11	31	11
Sheff Albion	4	1	7	14	10	32	10
Sheff Albion	3	0	8	15	9	33	9
Sheff Albion	2	0	7	16	8	34	8
Sheff Albion	1	0	6	17	7	35	7
Sheff Albion	0	0	5	18	6	36	6
Sheff Albion	0	0	4	19	5	37	5
Sheff Albion	0	0	3	20	4	38	4
Sheff Albion	0	0	2	21	3	39	3
Sheff Albion	0	0	1	22	2	40	2
Sheff Albion	0	0	0	23	1	41	1
Sheff Albion	0	0	0	24	0	42	0

OVERSEAS

LEAGUE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	1	15	3	2	30	10	48
Italy	2	12	4	3	25	15	40
France	3	10	5	4	20	20	35
Germany	4	8	6	6	15	25	30
England	5	6	7	7	10	30	25
Scotland	6	4	8	8	5	35	20
Netherlands	7	3	9	8	0	40	15
Belgium	8	2	10	7	0	45	10
Portugal	9	1	11	8	0	50	5
Sweden	10	0	12	9	0	55	0

CARLING F.A. PREMIERSHIP

CLUB	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Man Utd	28	11	2	15	36	7	34
2 Blackburn	27	9	3	15	28	18	30
3 Arsenal	25	10	2	13	29	9	32
4 Liverpool	24	8	2	14	26	17	28
5 Chelsea	23	7	2	14	24	14	25
6 Derby	22	6	3	13	22	16	23
7 Leicester	21	5	3	12	20	15	21
8 Leeds	20	5	3	12	18	15	20
9 West Ham	19	4	3	13	16	12	19
10 Coventry	18	4	2	14	14	21	18
11 Southampton	17	3	5	12	12	21	17
12 Newcastle	16	3	4	13	11	24	16
13 Sheff Wed	15	2	4	14	10	23	15
14 Villa	14	2	3	15	9	21	14
15 Everton	13	2	2	15	8	20	13
16 Warrington	12	1	3	16	7	14	12
17 Tottenham	11	1	2	17	6	13	11
18 Barnsley	10	1	1	18	5	12	10
19 Bolton	9	0	2	19	4	11	9
20 Palace	8	0	1	20	3	10	8

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

CLUB	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Aston Villa	18	8	4	6	22	16	28
2 Liverpool	17	7	5	5	20	17	26
3 Chelsea	16	6	6	4	18	18	24
4 Manchester City	15	5	7	4	16	19	23
5 Blackburn Rovers	14	4	8	4	14	20	22
6 Sheff Wed	13	4	7	5	13	21	21
7 Sheff Utd	12	3	8	6	12	22	20
8 Leeds	11	3	7	7	11	23	19
9 Crystal Palace	10	2	8	8	10	24	18
10 Sheff Albion	9	2	7	9	9	25	17
11 Derby	8	1	8	10	8	26	16
12 Sheff Albion	7	1	7	11	7	27	15
13 Sheff Albion	6	1	6	12	6	28	14
14 Sheff Albion	5	0	7	13	5	29	13
15 Sheff Albion	4	0	6	14	4	30	12
16 Sheff Albion	3	0	5	15	3	31	11
17 Sheff Albion	2	0	4	16	2	32	10
18 Sheff Albion	1	0	3	17	1	33	9
19 Sheff Albion	0	0	2	18	0	34	8
20 Sheff Albion	0	0	1	19	0	35	7

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

CLUB	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Chelsea	18	9	4	5	28	17	26
2 Manchester United	17	8	5	5	26	18	25
3 Liverpool	16	7	6	5	24	19	24
4 Manchester City	15	6	7	5	22	20	23
5 Blackburn Rovers	14	5	8	5	20	21	22
6 Sheff Wed	13	4	9	5	18	22	21
7 Sheff Utd	12	3	10	5	16	23	20
8 Leeds	11	2	11	5	14	24	19
9 Crystal Palace	10	1	12	5	12	25	18
10 Sheff Albion	9	1	11	6	11	26	17
11 Derby	8	0	12	6	10	27	16
12 Sheff Albion	7	0	11	7	9	28	15
13 Sheff Albion	6	0	10	8	8	29	14
14 Sheff Albion	5	0	9	9	7	30	13
15 Sheff Albion	4	0	8	10	6	31	12
16 Sheff Albion	3	0	7	11	5	32	11
17 Sheff Albion	2	0	6	12	4	33	10
18 Sheff Albion	1	0	5	13	3	34	9
19 Sheff Albion	0	0	4	14	2	35	8
20 Sheff Albion	0	0	3	15	1	36	7

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

CLUB	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Aston Villa	18	8	4	6	22	16	28
2 Liverpool	17	7	5	5	20	17	26
3 Chelsea	16	6	6	4	18	18	24
4 Manchester City	15	5	7	4	16	19	23
5 Blackburn Rovers	14	4	8	4	14	20	22
6 Sheff Wed	13	4	7	5	13	21	21
7 Sheff Utd	12	3	8	6	12	22	20
8 Leeds	11	3	7	7	11	23	19
9 Crystal Palace	10	2	8	8	10	24	18
10 Sheff Albion	9	2	7	9	9	25	17
11 Derby	8	1	8	10	8	26	16
12 Sheff Albion	7	1	7	11	7	27	15
13 Sheff Albion	6	1	6	12	6	28	14
14 Sheff Albion	5	0	7	13	5	29	13
15 Sheff Albion	4	0	6	14	4	30	12
16 Sheff Albion	3	0	5	15	3	31	11
17 Sheff Albion	2	0	4	16	2	32	10
18 Sheff Albion	1	0	3	17	1	33	9
19 Sheff Albion	0	0	2	18	0	34	8
20 Sheff Albion	0	0	1	19	0	35	7

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

CLUB	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Aston Villa	18	8	4	6	22	16	28
2 Liverpool	17	7	5	5	20	17	26
3 Chelsea	16	6	6	4	18	18	24
4 Manchester City	15	5	7	4	16	19	23
5 Blackburn Rovers	14	4	8	4	14	20	22
6 Sheff Wed	13	4	7	5	13	21	21
7 Sheff Utd	12	3	8	6	12	22	20
8 Leeds	11	3	7	7	11	23	19
9 Crystal Palace	10	2	8	8	10	24	18
10 Sheff Albion	9	2	7	9	9	25	17
11 Derby	8	1	8	10	8	26	16
12 Sheff Albion	7	1	7	11	7	27	15
13 Sheff Albion	6	1	6	12	6	28	14
14 Sheff Albion	5	0	7	13	5	29	13
15 Sheff Albion	4	0	6	14	4	30	12
16 Sheff Albion	3	0	5	15	3	31	11
17 Sheff Albion	2	0	4	16	2	32	10
18 Sheff Albion	1	0	3	17	1	33	9
19 Sheff Albion	0	0	2	18	0	34	8
20 Sheff Albion	0	0	1	19	0	35	7

OVERSEAS

LEAGUE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	1	15	3	2	30	10	48
Italy	2	12	4	3	25	15	40
France	3	10	5	4	20	20	35
Germany	4	8	6	6	15	25	30
England	5	6	7	7	10	30	25
Scotland	6	4	8	8	5	35	20
Netherlands	7	3	9	8	0	40	15
Belgium	8	2	10	7	0	45	10
Portugal	9	1	11	8	0	50	5
Sweden	10	0	12	9	0	55	0

OVERSEAS

LEAGUE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	1	15	3	2	30	10	48
Italy	2	12	4	3	25	15	40
France	3	10	5	4	20	20	35
Germany	4	8	6	6	15	25	30
England	5	6	7	7	10	30	25
Scotland	6	4	8	8	5	35	20
Netherlands	7	3	9	8	0	40	15
Belgium	8	2	10	7	0	45	10
Portugal	9	1	11	8	0	50	5
Sweden	10	0	12	9	0	55	

Tiverton thrive on sense of purpose

Spalding United1
Tiverton Town2

By WALTER GAMMIE

A STRONG sense of mission characterises Tiverton Town's approach to the FA Carlsberg Vase. They left Wembley empty-handed on their previous trip to the final in 1993 and, having assembled a formidable force in the Screwfix Direct League, it is an omission they have been determined to rectify.

Their sense of purpose was clear from the way that they set about cutting down the orange-clad Tulips of Spalding before a crowd of 2,038 at the Sir Harry Stewart Field in the quarter-finals on Saturday.

In the eighth minute, a break down the left and cross by Leonard found Daly unmarked at the far post, where he controlled the ball on his chest before planting it past Cross.

Cross blocked a rasping drive by the Tiverton striker beat him in the thirtieth minute. A long ball forward flicked off Keeble's head for Everett to retrieve, beat the defender and guide inside the near post.

For all the thunder of their opening, by the finish Tiverton were saluting Smith, their towering central defender, for keeping them on course. Spalding, regrouped and reinvigorated, showed more in the second half, but, thanks to Smith were allowed only a late goal, glanced in by Keeble from Langford's corner.

If a header by Korkmaz from a cross by Wilkinson had not bounced off the inside of the post half-an-hour before the finish, it might have been a different story.

Martyn Rogers, the Tiverton manager, said: "Spalding played the better football in the second half and we were grateful for the two-goal cushion."

Alan Day, the Spalding manager, added another Vase so near-but-so-far setback to a collection that began at King's Lynn and Holbeach. "I hope Tiverton go on and win the Vase," he said. "They've certainly got the personnel to do so."

SPALDING UNITED (4-2-2): K. Cross - R. Cooper, M. Keeble, G. Blythe, A. Langford, G. Beech (sub: L. Wilkinson, G. Munn), T. Korkmaz, W. Staring (sub: G. Dobby, G. V. Fortuna, C. Wilson).
TIVERTON TOWN (5-3-2): P. Edwards - M. Fallon, J. Smith, P. Tallentire, N. Saunders, D. Leonard - K. Henslowe, S. Day, P. Corring - N. Smith (sub: P. Varley, B. P. Evans, R. Powell).
Referee: P. Dove.

Champions continue to falter as Gough pleads his innocence Rangers pay for indiscretions

KEVIN McCARRA



Scottish commentary



Gascoigne, the Rangers and England midfield player, tussles with Hamilton, of Hearts, at Ibrox

The Bell's Scottish League premier division may not be lost, but Rangers did misplace their self-control on Saturday in the 2-2 draw with Heart of Midlothian. They are now four points behind Celtic, the leaders, and the peevishness at Ibrox was exacerbated by a sense of persecution. A player from either side was sent off during the course of the game, but Richard Gough, the Rangers captain, took his leave rancorously.

He was later informed by Kenny Clark, the referee, that he will be reported to the Scottish Football Association for dissent. The authorities are also likely to punish him for criticisms he has made since the official's decisions. Walter Smith, the Rangers manager, expressed similar opinions to journalists and he, too, may be asked to explain himself.

The scene immediately after Gough's dismissal, in the 65th minute, was unedifying as Clark urged the defender to depart before dealing with the protests of Smith and Archie Knox, his assistant. Rangers will defend themselves against the charge of petulance by claiming that they merely displayed the righteous anger of victims of injustice.

Gough, it was claimed, is innocent. The centre half, who had already been booked, hurried in on Neil McCann from behind and reached the ball with his left foot before making the contact, with his right leg, that hurt the Hearts winger. So far as Rangers are concerned, no foul had been committed, but that stance can only be held with complete confidence by those who ignore certain passages in the laws of the game.

Gough had slid in with both feet and connection with the ball does not necessarily excuse the impact on McCann. If the challenge was "careless, reckless or involving disproportionate force", then Clark was fully entitled to caution the offender. Rangers place a different interpretation on the event, but the referee's opinion is certainly tenable.

For once, the usual charge of inconsistency that is levelled against officials will not stand. Clark continued to be strict, showing Grant Murray, of Hearts, his second yellow card of the day, in the 78th minute, when the right back attempted a tackle on Jonatan Johansson that did little more than hurriedly against the Rangers' substitute. There might have been tantrums from Hearts, who now stand two points in front of Rangers, but two behind Celtic, who won 1-0 at Ibrox on Tuesday.

about the severity with which Murray had been treated. There was no such trade from Jim Jefferies, the manager. He was self-possessed enough to note that Murray and Gough had taken the imprudent risk of attempting the tackle from behind after they had already been booked.

Such composure is beyond Rangers' grasp at present. Last weekend, they were similarly enraged about the dismissal of Alex Cleland, a defender, against Hibernian, but there also the referee's decision could be justified.

Rangers leave themselves open to the accusation that they act with dignity only when they are successful. The serious challenge they now face, after winning nine consecutive championships, has coincided with an outbreak of rage and paranoia. The club may choose to disregard its critics, but the lack of composure is hurting not only Rangers' reputation.

They are a flustered team and poor judgment is impairing their results. In the histrionics of the Gough affair, few thought to ask why he felt the need to hurdle into McCann when the player was near the halfway line with his back to the Rangers goal.

The Ibrox side have the kind of propensity to the unforced error that used to be the hallmark of the British tennis player. McCann put Hearts 1-0 ahead when Goram, the Rangers goalkeeper, hacked the ball straight to him. The Edinburgh club's second goal, from Jim Hamilton, was made possible by Bjorklund's mistake that saw Locke rob him of possession.

If Rangers are to have any chance of recovering their hold on the premier division, they will first have to get a grip of themselves.

Egypt take final step with a sprint

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

TWO early goals enabled Egypt to overcome South Africa in the final of the African Nations Cup on Saturday and secure the title for a record-equalling fourth time. Ahmed Hassan struck with only five minutes gone and Tarek Mostafa scored eight minutes later after a quickly taken free kick.

The lightning start effectively killed the tournament's showpiece as a spectacle. Egypt's defence holding out competently against an impotent South Africa attack.

"We lost fair and square," Jomo Sono, the South Africa coach, said. "I was given no chance of reaching the final. I reached the final. I'm happy. I'm finished now. I have done my part."

He now hands over the team to Philippe Troussier, a Frenchman who coached Burkina Faso through this competition and will guide South Africa's fortunes when they play in the World Cup finals for the first time in France this summer.

Mahmoud el-Gohari became the first person to win the trophy as both a player and coach. The 60-year-old was in Egypt's winning team in 1959, when he was the leading goalscorer in the competition.

Henry Ramzy, the Egypt defender, said: "This was very important for Egypt after we failed to reach France. After we took a two-goal lead, it was easier than I had imagined."

AS Roma ended Fiorentina's four-month unbeaten away run in Serie A yesterday with a crushing 4-1 victory that thrust the capital club back into the race for a European Cup Champions' League position next season.

They moved up to fifth place on 41 points, one behind Udinese, who were beaten by a 35th-minute penalty for Empoli by Carmine Esposito. Parma came back from a goal down to beat Bologna 2-1 and stay level on points with Roma.

AC Milan failed to get the better of second-from-bottom Lecce, drawing 0-0, but Fiorentina, fighting to avoid relegation, surprised Sampdoria with a 1-0 win.

Giacomo Dicans, the Vicenza defender, scored twice to earn the Cup Winners' Cup quarter-finalist a welcome 2-1 victory over Brescia.

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RUGBY UNION

Stroud in taxing triumph

Stroud 38
Old Verulamian 21

By BARRY TROWBRIDGE

STROUD outscored Old Verulamian by six tries to two in this NPT Cup quarter-final, referred outstandingly by Stuart Terhegge at Fromehall Park on Saturday, in what looks to be a healthy winning margin.

However, Verulamian made life far more taxing than the scoreline suggests and left the field knowing that, if results in sport were based on effort alone, it would be them in the hat, with Bedford Athletic, West Park Bramhope and Penzance and Newlyn when the draw for the semi-finals is made today.

A hamstring injury to Ally Clarke, their first-choice inside centre, kept him on the bench until half-time and that, effectively, led to Verulamian's downfall.

Filling the position before the break, Simon French ran a flow of possession back at the Stroud forwards, unaware, it seemed, of where he was spending the weekend.

In Gloucestershire, such action is always likely to prove fruitless, however much Stroud officials justifiably championed their side's free-flowing attacking game before kick-off, and it was only when Clarke appeared that the Verulamian wings were brought into play and the scoreline began to reflect more the pattern of the game. By then, Stroud were clear.

SCORERS: Stroud: Tries: Cambridge (2), Peters (1), 22, Nicholson (2), 29, Sharpe (2), 35, 42, 48, 55, 62, 69, 76, 83, 90, 97, 104, 111, 118, 125, 132, 139, 146, 153, 160, 167, 174, 181, 188, 195, 202, 209, 216, 223, 230, 237, 244, 251, 258, 265, 272, 279, 286, 293, 300, 307, 314, 321, 328, 335, 342, 349, 356, 363, 370, 377, 384, 391, 398, 405, 412, 419, 426, 433, 440, 447, 454, 461, 468, 475, 482, 489, 496, 503, 510, 517, 524, 531, 538, 545, 552, 559, 566, 573, 580, 587, 594, 601, 608, 615, 622, 629, 636, 643, 650, 657, 664, 671, 678, 685, 692, 699, 706, 713, 720, 727, 734, 741, 748, 755, 762, 769, 776, 783, 790, 797, 804, 811, 818, 825, 832, 839, 846, 853, 860, 867, 874, 881, 888, 895, 902, 909, 916, 923, 930, 937, 944, 951, 958, 965, 972, 979, 986, 993, 1000.

STROUD: G. Fennell, M. Nicholson, A. Cambridge, J. Peters, S. Reed (cap), A. Sharpe (capt), S. Thompson, I. Moore, P. Bashford (cap), P. Moore, G. H. Watfield (cap), I. Giddens, G. P. Phillips, A. Bean, R. Davey (prop), M. Bailey, J. S. Cole, C. Ward (prop), A. Smith, J. S. Miles.

OLD VERULAMIAN: S. Durham (cap), R. Dicks, G. R. Ransom, D. Cawthra (prop), A. Clarke, M. S. French, P. Wetz, P. Palfreys, T. Murray, G. Gil, G. Tarver, W. Cook, C. Leigh, P. Ockfield, A. Skerrett, N. Walsh, A. Waring.

Referee: S. Terhegge (Hampshire).

GUIDE TO THE WEEK AHEAD

TODAY

Kick-off 7.30 unless stated
denotes all-ticket match

FA Carling Premiership
West Ham v Arsenal (8.0)

Spalding Cup
Semi-final, second leg
Northwich (2) v Macclesfield (3) (7.45)

UNION LEAGUE: League First division
Cup: Barnet, first leg: Aston United v Lincoln United

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First division
Bristol v Exeter (at Wokingham FC, 7.0)

POINTING LEAGUE: Premier division
Stoke v Walsley (at Newcastle Town FC, 7.0), First division: Sunderland v Bolton (at Durham City FC, 7.0); Wolverhampton v Huddersfield (at Telford United FC, 7.0)

WANTON LEAGUE: First division
Wantsley v Chatham

INTERNATIONAL MIDLAND INVITATION CUP: Third round: Worcester v Scarborough

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier division: Peterborough v Selby

OTHER SPORT
BASKETBALL: Basketball League: Leopards v Derby Storm (7.30)
BOWLS: English women's indoor national championships (at Yarmouth)
HOCKEY: British Aerospace national under-16 schools championships (at Milton Keynes)

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Basketball League: Thames Valley Tigers v London Towers (8.0)

BOWLS: English women's indoor national championships (at Yarmouth)
SCOTTISH: English ABA, first (at National Indoor Arena, Birmingham)

THURSDAY
FOOTBALL
EUROPEAN CUP WINNERS' CUP: Quarter-finals, first leg: NEC/Nottm Forest (6.0); Real Betis v Chelsea (8.30); Roda JC Kerkrade v Valencia (7.45); Santos Laguna v Vissel Kobe (7.45)

OTHER SPORT
BASKETBALL: Basketball League: Derby Devils v Sheffield Sharks (8.0); Leopards v Manchester Giants (7.30)

BOWLS: English women's indoor national championships (at Yarmouth)

FRIDAY
FOOTBALL
NATIONALE LEAGUE: Second division: Oldham v Bristol City (7.45); Third division: Doncaster v Scarborough

RUGBY UNION
AN INTERNATIONAL MATCH: France v Ireland (at Quilley, 7.0); Wales v Scotland (at Newport, 7.0)

UNDER-21 INTERNATIONAL MATCHES: Scotland v Ireland (at La Roche, 8.0); Wales v Scotland (at Caerphilly, 8.0)

AB LEAGUE: Second division: Warrington v Old Wesley (7.0)

OTHER SPORT
BASKETBALL: Basketball League: Chester Jets v Sheffield Sharks (8.0)
BOWLS: English women's indoor national championships (at Yarmouth)

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Basketball League: Crystal Palace v Chester Jets (7.30); Leicester Riders v Derby Storm (8.0); Manchester Giants v Worthing Bears (7.30); Birmingham Bulls v London Leopards (7.30); Westford Rangers v Newcastle Eagles (7.30)

BOWLS: English women's indoor national championships (at Yarmouth)

BOWLING: World Bowling Organization heavyweight championships: H. Hilde (Norway) v J. Morris (US) (at Beveridge Leisure Centre, Reading)

ICE HOCKEY: Superleague play-offs: Dundee v Forth (8.0); Dundee v Forth (8.0); Newcastle Cobras v Nottingham Panthers (8.30); Group B: Cardiff Devils v Manchester Storm (8.30); Preston Bees v Doncaster Bees (8.0)

ROWING: Women's head of the river race (at Henley, 11.15)

TABLE TENNIS: English national championships (at Barn)

SUNDAY
FOOTBALL
Kick-off 3.0 unless stated
FA CUP: Sixth round: Arsenal v West Ham, Newcastle v Barnsey (6.0)

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Chelsea v Aston Villa

NATIONALE LEAGUE: Third division: Swanssea v Cardiff (12.0)

TENNIS: SCOTTISH CUP: Fifth round: Dundee United v Celtic

RUGBY UNION
ALLEN DUNBAR PREMIERSHIP: First division: Stroud v Bath (3.0); Stroud v Wasps (8.0)

RUGBY LEAGUE
Kick-off 3.0 unless stated
FIRST DIVISION: Dewsbury Rams v Kilmory Camp, Leek v Featherstone, Wakefield Trinity, Rochdale Hornets v Featherstone, Rovers, Whitehaven v Wigan, Hull Kingston Rovers (3.30); Widnes Vikings v Huddersfield Giants

OTHER SPORT
BASKETBALL: Basketball League: First division: London Towers v Sheffield Sharks (at NEC, Birmingham, 6.30); Basketball League: Newcastle Cobras v Crystal Palace (8.30)

ICE HOCKEY: Superleague play-offs: Dundee v Forth (7.0); Group B: Manchester Storm v Birmingham Bulls (8.0); Birmingham Bees v Doncaster Bees (8.0)

TABLE TENNIS: English national championships (at Barn)

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Nicholas
Stanley
manly
he settle
old score

Nicholas brightens Sky by defusing fireworks

You may not have known that Guyana, the country on the South American continent that belongs to the British West Indies, boasts four of the world's eight types of sea turtle. Or that, despite its poverty, gold is mined there. Part of the excellence of Sky Television's coverage of Test cricket lies in the way that it tries to relate the game to local circumstances, so that viewers get a wider picture.

"Excellence": there's a word one does not always associate with Sky, but the fact is that its cricket coverage has improved vastly over the past couple of years and is now as good as anything in the world.

No longer must viewers put up with the sixth-form enthu-

siasm of Charles Colville, who experienced tremors of sexual delight every time the ball beat the bat and for whom a wicket triggered off the most uncontrollable climax. Colville is now confined to barracks in Isleworth, where he talks to Darren Gough and similar intellectual titans in the lunch and tea intervals.

Mark Nicholas, who is in his second winter as the presenter, is proving to be an outstanding success in the job — though to be fair to Colville, which is not always easy, he did the speaking-to-camera bit jolly well, too. Nicholas may now be the best live presenter on any sport. Informed, thoroughly at ease and with a well-modulated speaking voice, he

is capable of sustaining the long innings that enables the others to play their strokes.

Sky's coverage of the aborted first Test was a little masterpiece of sports reporting. As Nicholas held everything together, without ever resorting to hyperbole, Bob Willis and Paul Allott took the viewer through the various stages of the game's disintegration, with good use of live interviews with key participants in the drama. There was no exaggeration, simply a willingness to follow the story through.

This relaxed style is apparent in the way that commentators establish "partnerships" in the box, sharing views on the cricket in a friendly, though never incestuous, way. If, say,



MICHAEL HENDERSON
TV ACTION REPLAY

Willis challenges Ian Botham, it is merely a way of persuading him to justify his opinion by explaining to the viewer exactly what he means; and when somebody like Botham is prepared to be specific, rather than just waffle, it is wise to listen.

Everything is examined in detail, for the viewer's benefit. There was a good example of this on Friday when Allott was

looking closely at Dean Headley's approach and delivery stride, with sensible use of graphics to support his commentary, when the bowler suddenly struck oil with Campbell's wicket. All the time, there is a sense of a difficult game being explained, in straightforward but not condescending terms, to people who may not grasp everything that is going on.

Then there is Michael Holding. One shouldn't be surprised if crowds flocked down to Isleworth holding placards saying: "We Want More Mikey!" With his mellifluous voice and the cadences of his Jamaican accent, Holding exerts a spell that is almost hypnotic. He talks good sense too, putting to shame those fast bowlers of a previous generation who think that the world ended with their passing. Holding has grace, but he also has humility, which is a rare and noble thing. And he does talk, at least once a session, about "pace and bounce".

There is still room for improvement. Willis referred to Atherton being "proactive"

and the usual punishment for using that non-word is two hours in the stocks. The new ball is never due, it is available, and the wicket is the thing you stick in the ground at each end. Is it too late to revert to the old use of "the first day", instead of the brutal "day one"? Probably. Nevertheless, Sky is doing a first-rate job.

Match of the Day, alas, is looking increasingly ramshackle. Whereas Alan Hansen is a real expert, with a sharp brain and a tongue to match, dear old Trevor Brooklin sounds wretched. Invited on Saturday night to explain Paul Ince's crankiness, he ducked the question altogether. Come on, Niall Sloane,

the editor, crack the whip. What is the man there for? Brooklin also used 22 "y'knows" in one rambling exposition. Appalling.

Even more appalling was Tony Gubba's commentary on the Villa v Liverpool match. Gubba seems to have been around for ever yet his commentary style extends to making a series of fragmented, unrelated and often unnecessary remarks — and when he said there was "no more exciting sight in football" than Stan Collymore on the charge, a million ears must have popped. It was left to Barry Davies, who knows there is more to life than football, to introduce a welcome sense of proportion.

'Collymore knew he had something to prove. He ran round as if his shorts were on fire'

Stanley so manly as he settles old score

Apparently it really helps footballers if they've got "something to prove". At all events, at Villa Park on Saturday afternoon, that was the consensus explanation for Stan Collymore's decision to drop the longstanding petulant teenager act, expand his chest, throw his weight about and steal all the limelight in a 2-1 win over his old club, Liverpool.

"Something to prove." It's one of those manly macho things, of course. About dignity. Narrowing the eyes and squaring the shoulders, the hero rides off down Main Street while his girl runs alongside, begging him to come back. "You ain't got nothin' to prove, Jed Clayton!" she pants. But he breaks into a canter and she spins off and tumbles in the dust. Never stand in the way of a man who's got something to prove, lady. It's between himself and — well, somebody else.

Despite his denials on Match of the Day, Collymore had any number of things to prove on Saturday. A man's right to high esteem has rarely stood so prominently in the spotlight. Mainly, he had to prove to his new boss — as well as to his old club, who don't like him — that he was worth the £7 million transfer fee that has hung above his head all season. He had to prove to the fans (belatedly) that he was committed to Villa. And as for the critics who are forever giggling him for squandering his career — well, "shoving their hands down their throats" was, I think, the expression that he used.

So, in a generally overheated game, the souped-up Collymore ran around as if his shorts were on fire, did a great deal of kicking and shoving and, as luck would have it, scored twice. Personally, I was pleased for him. Despite everything, I like watching Collymore, who is not only beautifully built for football but somehow makes

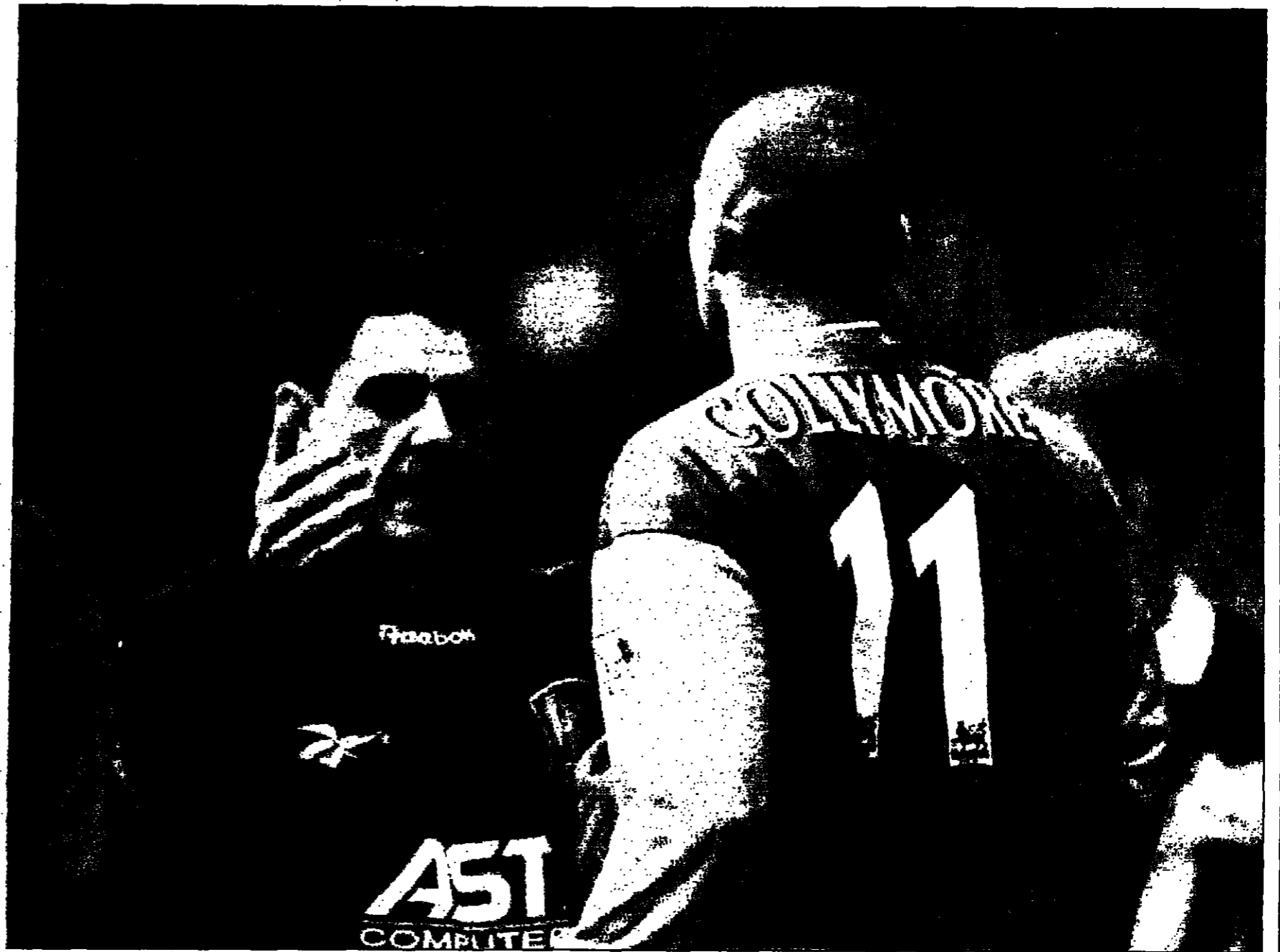
LYNNE TRUSS



the claret-and-blue of Villa's strip look positively attractive.

Happy Holte End fans had good cause to sing "Stan, Stan, Stanley Colly-MORE" several times, especially with the all-important goals. When Stan was taken off before the end, there was considerable applause. One shouldn't look at those goals too closely, incidentally. The first was underpowered and took a deflection. The second was a tap-in, when Ian Taylor's shot rebounded from the post directly at Collymore's feet. But he did more than score, of course. He played as though he meant it and wasn't being dragged along by the ear to the dentist. Afterwards, the consensus was: whatever Stan had set out to prove, he'd done it. He could put "QED" under Saturday's match, Stan Collymore, the Pythagoras of the Premiership. Hoorah.

All this is well and good — except that, actually, it isn't. In fact, it's desperately disappointing that the man's motivation was obviously so negative. Why not



Collymore gets a warm welcome from Gregory, the new Aston Villa manager, after his two-goal display against Liverpool. Photograph: Gary M. Prior / Allsport

play well just because you want to win? Or because you have the ability? Or because of the buckets of money? Looking around on Saturday, everyone had something extra to prove and it was tiresome. Roy Evans, that sweet, white-haired man, needed to prove that his club could still contend for the championship (they can't) and that he personally didn't deserve the sack (imminent). The long-suffering reserve Liverpool goalkeeper, Brad ("Who, me?") Friedel, had to show he deserved his chance to play (at last) in the place of David James. And so on.

Even the weather was in on the act, starting off with bright sun, then demonstrating freak polar blizzard for a few minutes (just to show us) and then brightening up

again. Yes, altogether, this was a grudge match. Eyes narrowed, shoulders squared, man's gotta shove it down your throat, come back, Jed! How fitting that it was against this background of mass petulance that Stanley Collymore finally chose to shine.

Basically, the teams were at each other's throats from the first whistle and although the referee, Mr Poll, was afterwards accused of insane leniency, herding scalded cats would have been a picnic compared with his job. Predictably, Paul ("Call me Einstein") Ince tangled with Collymore in the opening minutes — after which he was booed by the animated home crowd on every contact with the

ball. If it was cold on Saturday, incidentally, nobody noticed. There was so much jumping up and waving the arms about, and barking at the ref.

As for Stan, whenever you looked for him, he appeared to be engaged in yet another potential punch-up. Call it high spirits, but no wonder John Gregory took him off early. What if the perverse, saintly patience of Mr Poll finally snapped? Or what if Collymore got what he was plainly asking for and was torn publicly limb from limb? Passion is an excellent ingredient in football and it is often noticeably absent. We scratch our heads and wonder why. Surely there are enough carrots and sticks for footballers? They are offered incentives for winning, are bowed

out for losing. Unlike most of us doing jobs of work, they are cheered along in their everyday efforts by thousands of supporters, who pay good money to do it and turn out in snow and rain.

But what does Gregory know now about energising Collymore? Forget carrots and sticks, that's what think goals instead. Convince Collymore that half the opposing team loathe him personally and that this is the match that can knock them out of title contention. All those juicy, smackeroo carrots that have been offered to the man; all those critical sticks he's been beaten with — no effect whatever. But niggle him with a burr under the saddle and he's off. Oh dear, oh dear, it's really that easy.

Sorry to bang on about Collymore. Poor chap. He just exemplifies so perfectly an idiotic, disappointing thing about footballers.

Look how Stevenage's stupid "back pocket" jibe fired up Alan Shearer for the Cup replay — it was the same thing. And if a man so focused, sensible and highly motivated rises to such silly provocation, clearly there's nothing to be done.

"You ain't got nothin' to prove, Al Shearer!" his wife probably begged him on the day. But he set his eyes and pursed his lips. "Out of my way, little lady," he growled at her, without looking. "Back pocket, I'll show them! Out of my way, goddamit! I have got something to prove!"

SPORTS LETTERS

MCC vote on women

From Mr Raman Subba Row

Sir, Having attended MCC's special general meeting this week on admitting ladies to membership, I left Lord's glad in the knowledge that the members had by majority vote backed the committee but said that such a decision had resulted in an insufficient majority to be effective.

I do understand the point of view which says it is our club and no one is going to force us in any direction we don't want to take, but I, and I'm sure many other members, are disappointed that the committee, who have been so forward-thinking in the past years, have not been sufficiently supported on this issue.

Despite all the advice given by the committee that our responsibilities lie beyond the international, beyond the Long Room at Lord's, we have not been able to get the message over to enough members that adjustment to the environment around us is essential. The procedure doesn't automatically mean the abandonment of long-established principles — rather a balanced review of what is feasible in changing circumstances.

I would suggest that the committee considers re-raising the issue at another special general meeting in due course — with a clear explanation to the practical effect of approval. Perhaps that might even allow the club to enter the 21st century in a manner benefiting its great history. My hunch is that such a motion would secure more than the required majority.

Yours faithfully,
RAMAN SUBBA ROW,
Leeward,
Manor Way,
South Crofton,
CR2 7RT.

From Mr Nicholas Selmes

Sir, I would like to challenge the article by Ivo Tennant (February 24) that seeks to argue the case against admitting women to MCC membership.

Mr Tennant's argument, that women would disturb the enjoyment of watching the cricket by using the pavilion as a place to chat, is an insult to those women who would be prepared to wait 20 or more years to be elected. And his gripe over the extra expenditure that would be needed to provide new washrooms is laughable. The cost has been estimated at £310,000, whereas the rumoured combined cost of the new grandstand and media centre is more than

Cannabis and sport: the law should keep out

From Mr Ian Tapp

Sir, Prince Alexandre de Merode, president of the IOC medical commission, has said that drugs such as cannabis be subject to adequate sanctions in future as they are "not socially acceptable" (Report, February 20). The purpose of drug testing in sport is to detect performance-enhancing drugs which give competitors an unfair advantage, not to act as an arm of law enforcement.

More serious and disturbing is the release of information by a Canadian laboratory about snowboarder Ross Rebagliati's previous positive test for cannabis. This result was irrelevant under the rules of the snowboarding federation and yet it has been splashed across the world's press. Surely there are issues of confidentiality here, especially as the Japanese police have been conducting vigorous investigations.

£315 million. As with football and rugby before it, cricket needs to expand its popularity and improve its image within this country, not just for the television coverage and associated sponsorship money, but to encourage new involvement with the sport at all levels.

The sooner that membership of such a great institution as the MCC is open to everyone who loves the game, the better.

Yours sincerely,
NICHOLAS SELMES,
6 Arundel Gardens,
W11 2LA,
Nick.Selmes@compuserve.com

Slow batting?

From Mr Trevor Woolley

Sir, It was interesting to read John Woodcock's reflections on the third Test match in Trinidad — "one of the slowest, most protracted, most arduous and tortuous ever played" (February 19). He records "talk among old-timers of how much more inventive and resourceful" the batsmen of the 1953-54 touring side — Hutton, May, Grayson and Watson — would have been than "the present lot". Such talk is to perpetuate a myth.

Consistency in refereeing

From Mr Christopher Chown

The sense of honour, moral courage, and solidarity shown by the snowboarding contingent generally and, in particular, by the other competitors who stood to gain from Rebagliati's disqualification, is an example to more established sports.

I worked as a doping control officer for the Sports Council for a period. One of the factors that led me to leave was disquiet over this very issue. Statements from spokespeople from the Doping Control Unit have been scrupulously neutral, which suggests that this is an awkward area at all levels. It is good that this event has generated so much comment and shown up the regrettable encroachment of law enforcement into this area of sport.

Yours faithfully,
IAN TAPP,
94 Highliver Road, W10 6PN.

Slow batting?

From Mr Trevor Woolley

Sir, The refereeing of Colin Harte in the England-Wales match has received wide acclaim for the way in which he allowed the game to flow. However his style contrasted sharply with that of Jim Fleming — derided for his overzealous whistling in the Antipodes last season — whose strict control last autumn drew equal acclaim for clipping the feathers of the mighty All Blacks. Fleming dared to face up to the New Zealanders for their offside stance, which had previously brought howls of indignation from the great and the good in English rugby.

What utter hypocrisy! That both of these gentlemen had a good game in the respective matches is not in question, but the breadth of interpretation of the current rulebook is both ludicrous and wide open to exploitation. England must have guessed that Harte would take a lenient view towards offside play and loose straggling, and took full advantage — indeed some of the resultant Welsh indiscipline could easily be ascribed to the frustration they must have felt at seeing continual

infringement go unchecked. It seems that it is all right for the laid-back southern hemisphere style to apply if it suits England, but there can be no doubt that had Fleming been officiating last Saturday, England would have been penalised many more times and a very different result might have followed. Likewise, if a less pedantic referee had officiated on December 6, the All Blacks may well have run away with the game as England did against Wales.

It is surely time for referees to be accorded respect and brought into the professional game with proper guidelines as to consistency. This might allow the less cynical nations the chance to compete, knowing where they stand, and we will have an enjoyable World Cup next year rather than the "Best and Rest" debacle currently predicted.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER CHOWN,
The Hole in the Wall, 16
George Street,
Bath BA1 2EH.

Sports letters may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5211. They should include a daytime telephone number.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk
It should include address and telephone number.

This week in THE TIMES



- FOOTBALL**
- Tomorrow: Bobby Robson on the Spanish threat to British clubs in Europe
 - Wednesday: UEFA Cup: Aston Villa travel to Spain to take on Atletico Madrid
 - Thursday: European Cup: Can Manchester United cash in at Monaco?
 - Friday: Cup Winners' Cup: Chelsea confront Real Betis in Seville
 - Saturday: The Premiership match-by-match: Oliver Holt, Steve McManaman and Danny Baker.

night. Hull Kingston Rovers, the first division leaders, finalists for the past two years, by 26-21.

RUGBY UNION: NEW COACH GROUNDED AS WASPS TAKE FLIGHT

Best meets worst of the exiles in cup defeat

London Irish 7
Wasps 41

BY MARK SOUSTER

EVEN in the bad times, Dick Best has always been an optimist, yet even he must be alarmed by the size of the task that lies ahead in restoring the fortunes of London Irish. In reaching the semi-finals of the Teddy's Bitter Cup, Wasps produced their most accomplished performance in what has been an indifferent season, but even so, the ease with which they brushed aside the exiles at Sumbury will be of real concern for all involved with Ireland rugby.

Warren Gatland, the new national coach, and Pat Whelan, the manager, were looking for clues from the five international squad members on duty as to how Ireland might trouble France in Paris, but they would have found little to encourage them. Only Conor O'Shea lived up to expectation, while David Humphreys endured a wretched afternoon before being substituted. It did not help that he was playing with a broken toe, which hampered his kicking.

Best, the caretaker coach, said: "We just didn't play, we couldn't keep

hold of the ball. We lost the game in the first half. Today was a cup game which went against us. The wind died in the second half and so did we."

Lawrence Dallaglio, the Wasps captain, said that his side had put the worst behind them this season and had emerged stronger for the experience. "We were very determined today," he said. "We had no excuses coming into this game. I am happy with the way we retained the ball and applied pressure."

Wasps played with the wind and sun at their back in the first half and 26 points without reply in that period ensured that their task was completed by half-time. Wasps varied the point of attack well, with Nick Greenstock prominent in a dominant midfield, while the Exiles contributed to their downfall with some naive rugby. They committed too many players to the breakdown, allowing Wasps free rein out wide, only a lack of composure and some desperate defending by the Exiles kept the scoreline respectable.

Wasps scored two tries in each half, the first by Kenny Logan, who popped up on the right to take advantage of good work by Lawrence Scrase. The centre plucked a loose

pass off his toes before Sampson put Logan away. Rees, who looked distinctly sharper at fly half, chimed in with five penalty goals during the match and 21 points in all. He kicked three in the first half, which ended with a try by Will Green, the prop forward.

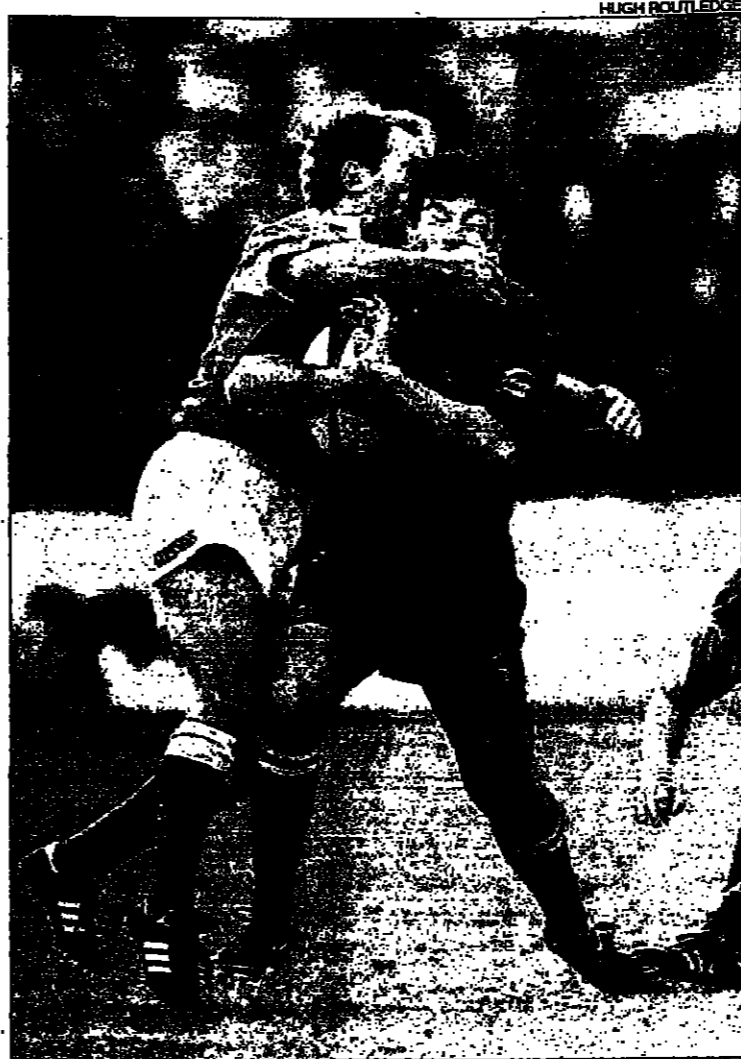
Rees kicked his fourth penalty goal soon after half-time as the Exiles looked to inject some momentum into their play. Their attacks were sporadic, though, and their only score arrived after 61 minutes - and even then they made heavy weather of it. Peter Richards, the scrum half, broke clear, Venter continued the move and O'Shea scored. Shane Roiser and Mike Friday compounded the Exiles' misery.

SCORERS: LONDON IRISH: The O'Shea (51m), Conventore, Woods. Wasps: Tulse Logan (11), Green (28), Rees (19), Friday (7), Conventore, Rees. Penalty goals: Rees 5 (15, 20, 30, 36, 51).

SCORING SEQUENCE (London Irish first): 9-7, 0-10, 0-12, 0-16, 0-19, 0-29, (kick-time), 0-29, 7-29, 7-34, 7-41.

LONDON IRISH: C O'Shea, J Bishop, B Venter, M McCall, N Woods, D Humphreys (capt), S Burns, S P Richards, L Mooney, R Venter, G Hallett (capt), J McLaughlin, T Harvey, M O'Hally (capt), G Fletcher, T K O'Connell (capt), C Reid, G K Dawson, J Foucault.

WASPS: P Sampson, S Roiser, N Greenstock, L Scrase, K Logan, G Rees, A Gorsewell (capt), M Friday, J D Mollon (capt), A Black, T J S Mitchell, W Green, M Venter, S Shaw (capt), A Road, G L Dallaglio, M White, P Stovener (capt), J Worsley, W Rafteree, E Morrison (capt).



Irish gag: a typically thrusting midfield incursion by Greenstock, the dynamic Wasps centre, is brought to an undignified end

Jenner inspires title challenge

London Welsh 22
Worcester 31

BY PETER BILLS

CLOSE enough on the scoreboard it may have seemed, but five tries to one was a more reliable indicator of Worcester's supremacy in this match between the top two sides in Jewson National League first division.

The Exiles' failings were exposed well before the end of a fascinating, if not exactly aesthetically pleasing, match. There were too many mistakes, too much pressure and too much at stake for a classic.

Lack of power undermined them and the Worcester forwards, inspired by Jenner, whose battle with Rowland Phillips was one of the highlights of the game, took charge after half-time.

Victory should cement Worcester's championship. There was a bustling, businesslike look to their play and they, much more than the Exiles, have made significant progress since they lost to the Welsh on their own ground last October.

Les Cusworth's influence on the team is obvious. The squad will be good enough to take them up, but new men will be needed for the next task, the assault on the Allied Dunbar Premiership second division.

The Exiles stayed in touch for an hour, but their initial tactics were puzzling. Craig Raymond kicking away inaccurately so much possession that their speedy backs might have used. His four penalties and dropped goal kept them afloat, but tries in the second half for Fenley, Scott and Jenner, all after pressure near the Welsh line, were decisive.

LONDON WELSH: The Shaw (30m), Conventore, Forster. Penalty goals: Raymond 4 (12, 45, 52, 84). Dropped goals: Raymond (28). Worcester: Tulp, Borer (18), Tomkinson (40), Fenley (47), Scott (59), Jenner (68). Conventore: Le Bas (18, 40, 47).

SCORING SEQUENCE (London Welsh first): 3-0, 8-7, 10-7, 13-7, 13-14 (kick-time), 18-14, 18-21, 19-21, 19-23, 22-24, 22-31.

LONDON WELSH: P Shaw, S Rodd, A Currie, S Phipps (capt), M Davies, 40m, J Reynolds, Craig Raymond, D Edwards, S Ennis, C Greig (capt), A Tucker, 72, A Mewers (capt), G Holmes, 60, E Morris, C Vogt, D Smith (capt), D Muckalt, 66, L Jones, P Phillips.

WORCESTER: J Lacey, P Holford, R Myler, R Tomkinson, N Beane, R Le Bas, B Fenley, M Leitch, D Burt, M Lyman (capt), M Crane, 65, N Testate, Chris Raymond, G Clark, N Richardson (capt), C Soan, 62, J Jenner.

Referee: B Campsall (Yorkshire Society)

RUGBY LEAGUE

Positive signs for Warrington

St Helens 35
Warrington Wolves 22

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

KNOWSLEY Road has been something of a charnel-house for Warrington, who had conceded 260 points on their four previous visits. Despite their elimination yesterday from the Silk Cut Challenge Cup, the 13-point defeat by the holders, St Helens, can be seen as a positive sign ahead of the Super League next month.

Fears that this fifth-round derby tie might be another mismatch were allayed by Jason Roach's try against his former club after three minutes. It was not until ten minutes before the end that St Helens could shake off the feelings of unease, when Goulding dropped a goal and Newlove's predatory instincts brought him a second touchdown.

A newly-named Warrington side pushed the letter of the law about holding down at the play-the-ball and occasionally exceeded it, which incensed Shann McRae, the St Helens coach, even if, privately, he will have been equally dissatisfied by the self-inflicted wounds charged by his side's "They used tactics which I don't consider to be in the spirit of the game," he said. "The referee had a tough job and handled it right, but if that's rugby league, we're in for some trouble because that was a poor exhibition by one team. My players were held back and taken out at the marker."

Warrington did have Doyle sent to the sin bin for a professional foul on Joynt in the first half and were fortunate that Stevens did not also receive ten minutes to cool off for a cheap shot on Sculthorpe, his former team-mate, while he was on the ground. Martyn was the victim of a late challenge by Penny, which the Rugby Football League video committee might care to look at today

when reviewing Martyn's earlier high tackle on Morley, for which the St Helens stand-off half was put on report.

Although not an overtly spiteful encounter, Warrington's spilling tactics were partly successful in slowing St Helens. The visitors led twice and drew level twice, but could not contain bulkier and speedier opponents once they had built up steam.

Apollo Perellini, a thirteenth-minute substitute, took up the enforcement role from the moment that he held off two tacklers to help supply Sullivan with St Helens's opening try. The Samoan, blighted by injury and inconsistent form last season, was irresistible, although it was between his legs that Briers directed a kick for Penny to collect Warrington's second try.

St Helens's answer was immediate. Martyn straightening up on to a smart pass by Goulding and finding a yawning gap, Warrington pegged back a 16-12 interval deficit with two penalties by Briers, another St Helens old boy, before Sculthorpe, the world's most expensive forward, linked on the left with Newlove, the game's costliest player, for a try worth £370,000 of anyone's money. When Cunningham drove in under Penny by the posts from acting half back, Warrington responded with a splendid, individual try by Forster, who appeared unannounced on the right wing. Goulding's subsequent dropped goal put St Helens two scores ahead.

Newlove's second try was a bit rough on Warrington, who should not let the result spoil a genuinely competitive performance.

SCORERS: St Helens: Tulse Newlove (2), Sullivan, Martyn, Cunningham, Goslin, Goulding (7). Dropped goal: Goulding. Warrington: Tulse Roach, Penny, Forster, Goulding (3).

ST HELENS: P Atherton, C Smith, A Haight, P Newlove, A Sullivan, T Martyn, R Goulding, G Goslin, K Cunningham, J O'Neill, C Joynt, P Sculthorpe, K Hammond, Suge, A Perellini, J Pickavance, S Long, P Ardron.

WARRINGTON WOLVES: L Penny, J Roach, M Edgar, J Roper, M Forster, A Doyle, J Brier, G Cunningham, S Forster, M Kelly, I Knott, B Tait, M Whelan, Suge, W Stevens, S MacLean, C Morley. Referee: R Smith (Castelford).

Offiah puts his mark on try-scoring history

TIMING is Martin Offiah's abiding quality (Christopher Irvine writes). The former Great Britain wing added the 42nd touchdown of his career, which moves him up to fifth place in the all-time try list, with seven minutes left at the Stoop Memorial Ground yesterday, to seal a 21-18 defeat of Halifax Blue Sox and London Broncos' first quarter-final appearance in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup. Damien Chapman scored 15 points on his London debut and provided the pass from which Offiah scored the decisive points. Halifax had led 12-2 and again 18-14 after a try by Gary Mercer. The visitors were then infuriated by Steve Kinsley disallowing an apparent score by Daino Powell because the referee felt that the ball had gone dead before Powell touched it down. Super League sides make up all but one of the eight quarter-finalists in the draw tonight. Hull Kingston Rovers, the first division lead-

ers, are the exception after a 46-24 defeat of Swinton. There was no hiding place for the two Cumbrian amateurs: Blenborough lost 78-0 at Hull Sharks, for whom Alan Hume scored five tries, and Sheffield Eagles posted a club-record 84-6 victory against Egremond.

Avoidance of Wigan Warriors, who have conceded no points in the competition so far, will be a priority for those that remain. A 76-point dismissal of Keighley was followed yesterday by a 50-0 victory at Dewsbury, in which Jason Robinson scored a second successive hat-trick of tries.

Salford Reds won 49-6 at Widnes, the cup kings of the Eighties, but the odds on Castleford Tigers reaching Wembley for the first time since 1992 have shortened dramatically after another late fightback on Saturday that overcame Bradford Bulls, finalists for the past two years, by 26-21.

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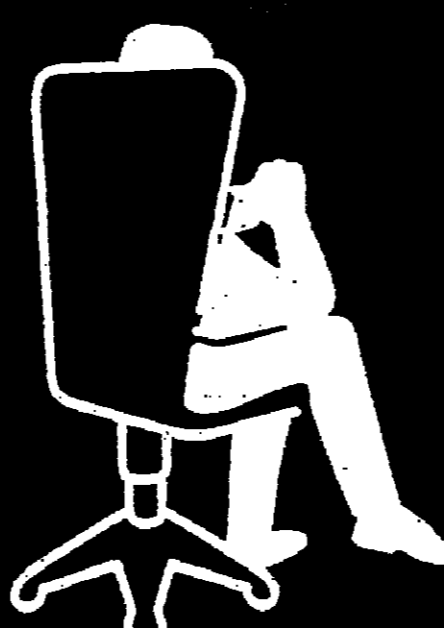
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Kevin Eason begins the countdown to the new Formula One season

Coulthard unwilling to cut corners

Great Britain's best hope for the Formula One world championship carries a burden that would sink a driver with even the slightest doubt about his ability, but David Coulthard is relishing the start of a season in which he is widely tipped to be the man most likely to overtake the sport's big two, Jacques Villeneuve and Michael Schumacher.

Coulthard's new McLaren-Mercedes promises much and there is a confidence around the McLaren factory in Woking, Surrey, that has been missing since the team last won the constructors' championship seven years ago. Yet the doubts about Coulthard's credentials persist.

Even with three victories to his name in a relatively short career, Coulthard has sometimes revealed frailties in a sport in which superhuman levels of concentration are needed over 16 races to win the world championship. Schumacher has that single-mindedness in abundance, perhaps overmuch, given the ferocity of his confrontations with Damon Hill and Villeneuve in past seasons. If Coulthard is going to be a serious challenger, he cannot afford mistakes.

In these past few days before the first grand prix, in Melbourne next Sunday, the nerves jangle and niggle about the car, almost insignificant in testing, are magnified by drivers who overcome their insecurity with an intensity rarely seen in any other sport. With Coulthard, it can seem the other way around. He is confident to the point of carelessness, a tendency that has cost him not only points but also the victories that might have carried him close to the championship already. Think back to the embarrassment of two races in 1995: he spun his Williams at Monza on a warm-up lap after dominating qualifying for pole position and then managed to shunt into the pit wall at Adelaide.

Coulthard still tenses when he remembers the fixed faces of his mechanics at Monza as they ushered him down the pit lane and into a garage, pulling the door down unceremoniously behind him. "I was all alone and I felt terrible," he said. He made daft errors that made even rivals wince and exasperated his peers. Stirling Moss, for one, thinks that Coulthard is simply too affable to fight his way to the world championship, lacking the "right kind of impetuosity".



Coulthard is quietly confident that he can win the world championship if he eliminates driver errors

That judgment is easy to make on a young man whose public utterances are so calm, but if anyone thinks that Coulthard is a "softie", they should have heard the tone of his radio conversation with Ron Dennis when he was told to pull over to let Mika Hakkinen, his team-mate, through to win the final race of the season, in Portugal, last year. Dennis's head-

phones all but exploded with the force of Coulthard's colourful invective. Coulthard is, above all, a pragmatist, though, and he decided that the boss's orders would guarantee a drive this year in a car rapidly looking as though it can rival the recent dominance of Williams.

Nothing has been left to chance. Coulthard took only one week off during the winter so that he could keep up a rigorous fitness regime and he has turned to an experienced hand to prevent silly incidents ruining his chances by recruiting Martin Brundle to his management team. Brundle had one of the coolest heads in Formula One and is showing a brilliant analytical brain in his commentaries for ITV. Coulthard

6 Mistakes have cost me in the past, but anything is possible

hopes that his ability to spot potential problems will add impetus to his title challenge. "Little mistakes have cost me in the past," he said. "I have been driving sometimes as though I was on a qualifying lap instead of trying to concentrate on leading the race. I need to make sure that I drive more consistently through the season, picking up points at every circuit, where in the past I have been winning or failing to finish."

"The thing is that I am more relaxed about my ability this year than at any time and I have not been in Formula One that long. I drove a couple of races last year where I was pressed hard by Michael [Schumacher], but I beat him on merit. I can do that again and each season brings more experience. If I can just find the consistency right through the season, then anything is possible."

Brundle believes in Coulthard's ability and the Scot would also be a wonderful antidote to the sporting anti-heroes of recent times — a sponsor's delight, always turning out in suit and tie, unfailingly polite. The portents are certainly good in a sport in which being in the right car at the right time is a key ingredient in becoming a champion. At 27, Coulthard is still young, but he has inevitable experience with more than 50 races to his credit already — and he knows how to win.

It seems that he was always destined to reach the peak of his career in a McLaren. Nine years ago, the team ran a competition with Autosport magazine to find a young driver for the future: a gangly teenager from a small village in Scotland won and was allowed a run in the full Formula One car. That was the first time David Coulthard tasted success in a McLaren; it may not be the last.

Arrows forced to face up to life without Damon

Unravelling the secrets of flies you can bank on

Brian Clarke on how to tie two of his favourite early-season trout patterns

March is the month when, after their long hibernation, flyfishers come blinking into the light. Another season is dawning and there is work to be done. There are lines to be treated, reels to be serviced, whippings to be checked, flies to be tied.

It is the flies that take the time. I have just spent my first couple of hours of the year running up a few dry flies and nymphs — mostly simple, standard dressings, the like of which can be had from most tackle shops. Two patterns, however, are dressings that cannot be found anywhere, because they are my own. Each has caught me countless trout. Each is at its best on the small stillwaters that many anglers start their season. Each is effective from now until late summer. Each incorporates that most elusive quality: life.

Most of the insects that trout eat are small and in artificial flies designed to suggest them, the bulk of any pattern is made up by the hook, which inevitably builds in rigidity. Tied on small hooks, most fly-dressing materials have to be kept short — and the shorter any material is, the stiffer it becomes. The two flies I have been tying overcome this problem. One is a mayfly nymph (in olive green, this dressing suggests a damselfly nymph as well); the other is a spider pattern. Both are effective, whether cast "blind" or used as stalking patterns for visible fish.

The mayfly nymph is tied on a size 10 long-shanked hook on which a short length of lead wire has been wound a little behind the eye in the shape of an egg. The lead

through hot orange to greens and browns — or I leave the bare lead, dull and grey, immediately behind the eye. I put one or at most two turns of a long-fibred hackle that has a broken pattern. That is the second fly finished.

Each fly is tied with varying amounts of lead to achieve different sinking rates. I distinguish flies by their sinking speeds when they are side by side in the box by colour-coding the tying silk — green for slow-sinking, orange for medium and brown for fast — but any variations will do.

The key to effectiveness, of course, is how and when the two flies are fished. Some points. I use the bright yellow and orange versions of the spider in coloured water when visibility is a factor. While it is true that a fish will take a fly just because it has seen it, it is certainly true that no fish will take a fly it has not seen. I use the mayfly nymph more often than the spider as a stalking pattern because it is easy to see in clear water. While, when stalking a sighted fish, the real clue to a take is the behaviour of the trout itself — does it suddenly diverge from its line? Does it suddenly open and close its mouth? — everything is more certain if the fly itself can be seen as well.

Early in the season when the water is cold and no fish are rising — or at any time when the

fish can be seen well down — the heavily-weighted patterns come into their own. They should be used on the end of long leaders in the first instance, because then depth is the priority. They should be used on shorter leaders where fish can be seen, because then accuracy is para-

mount it is necessary to get the fly in front of the fish, on its line and at its depth, before the trout sees it. Both dressings are deadly "no drop" — that is, when free-falling through the water.

"Life" is imparted by the way the two flies are moved. The mayfly nymph should be retrieved with short jerks and pauses with intermittent steady pulls, to get maximum movement from the ephemeral tail. The spider is fished as slowly and steadily as possible with intermittent short jerks, so that the hackle fibres can stream and waft about.

The take of a sighted fish to either fly is usually obvious. The take of an unsighted fish is usually confident, with the line simply tightening and then locking solid.

I expect to experience both kinds soon.
 Brian Clarke's fishing column appears on the first Monday of each month.

Keeping pace with the champions of tomorrow

BY JOHN GOODBODY
SOME teachers and coaches have to face what at first appears to be a delightful dilemma: how to handle the career of an outrageously talented athlete. Do you hold youngsters back or push them? How do you retain their interest when they are far ahead of their rivals? And how do you keep the interest in the early teenage years when so many give up after suffering inevitable defeats in competition at the top level.

The problem became evident at the home international under-16 indoor athletics meeting at Birmingham on Saturday, with the supreme sprinting of Tristan Anthony and Vernicha James. Experienced observers at the National Indoor Arena were drooling over the potential of the English pair, who both won their 200 metres races by more than a second, breaking the meeting records and leading their country to team wins. Anthony has the stride and leg speed that he would like to use down the wing for Tottenham Hotspur. However, he admits he is "not that good at football". Instead, the 15-year-old from Monks Walk School in Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, has the prospect of a career of rare promise in athletics.

Colin Sargent, his coach, said: "I have never seen anyone like him. He is phenomenal and we actually haven't done any sprint training this winter." Anthony is 5ft 11in tall. Anthony has been practising technical work with Judy Vernon, the 1974 Commonwealth

champion, to "open the doors" for a possible move to the 400 metres hurdles. He has the height for the event and the blazing speed — he also won the 60 metres on Saturday in a meeting record of 7.04sec. Sargent said: "He does not realise how good he could be. Tristan is naturally laid back and unassuming. We must not push him — and we won't — and we will wait to see what event he does best." Anthony trains only four times a week with the Verlea Club, but has the essential support of his parents. His mother, Cynthia, said: "We always thought he was good, but parents always do when their child is involved. It was only when we took him to Verlea that people began to talk about him." Last season, Anthony won the English schools 200 metres title and did not lose a race, except when injured. His mother said: "We have to try

to give him as good a start as we can." As so often, parents are the forgotten sponsors of British sport. She is a lover of athletics. "When the big events take place, I'm glued to the television. Tristan will watch but he would never say 'I am going to be the next Linford Christie.' Which is just as well, for at the moment he can afford to take things gradually, as can James, from the Thomas Tallis School in



Greenwich. Only 13, she was as mature as Tristan, mentally and physically, and took the 200 metres in 24.76sec. She has been guided by Coral Davis and Jennifer Stoute, with Clarence Callender, the former international sprinter, providing technical input. At the moment, there is little hard training — up to three days a week and much of it technical and tactical appreciation, such as showing the sprinter how to run off a bend or off other competitors. "If her body continues to make her run faster, then fair enough," Stoute said. A group of their athletes is visiting the United States this summer, but James will not be going. Stoute said: "She can appreciate the experience another year. She has plenty of time. Vernicha has still to learn to lose and to come back from defeats."

Results, page 39

EXCLUSIVE COMPETITION THE TIMES

JVC WORLD CUP QUIZ

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In the run up to the World Cup, the most exciting sporting event of the year, The Times is teaming up with JVC to give every reader the chance to win prizes totalling £25,000. This week's prize is a 28in Nicam stereo widescreen television.

The winner of last week's World Cup Quiz is Ms Angela Cant of Peguarr, St Maryrn, Padstow, Cornwall.

The answers were: Alan Shearer, Japan and Germany. Every week we will be posing three questions to test your knowledge of the World Cup.

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Simply call our competition hotline 0891 405998 (ex UK +44 990 100 326) with your answers to these three questions for your chance to win this week's prize. The winner will be chosen at random from all correct entries received. Normal TNL competition rules apply.

1. Which African World Cup finalist played one of their qualifying matches for the 1998 finals in France?
 - a) Tunisia b) DR Congo c) Burkino Faso
2. Which World Cup finalist does Deon Burton play for?
 - a) Romania b) Japan c) Jamaica
3. Which country created a sensation when they beat Italy in the finals of the 1986 World Cup?
 - a) Brazil b) North Korea c) Germany

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0891 calls cost 50p per minute. 0990 calls cost 50p per minute. Lines open until midnight, Wednesday March 5, 1998.

CHANGING TIMES

BOWLS

Whitehead's triumph built on home rule

By DAVID RHYNS JONES

LYNNE WHITEHEAD, the 1995 British outdoor junior champion, became only the second player to have won the national junior singles titles on carpet and on grass when she defeated Sam Allcorn, from the Angel Tenbridge club, 21-10 in the final of the English under-31 singles championship at Posters Leisure Resort, in her home county of Norfolk, yesterday.

"I really wanted to win that one," Whitehead, 24, said. A pensions administrator, she lost in the final two years ago and in the semi-finals last year.

Allcorn, 23, who sorts mail for the Post Office, said: "I didn't know where I was or what I was doing — I took up bowls three years ago and only entered the competition for a laugh." Her naive approach paid off so well that she beat Amy Gowshall, the defending champion, in the quarter-finals and reached the final with a 21-13 win over Michelle Moorings, who had toppled Katherine Hawes, the 1995 champion, in the last eight. Whitehead had reached the quarter-finals with a 21-12 victory over Anita Smith, from Clarrie Dunbar.

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LEGAL NOTICES

CADILLA HOLDING COMPANY LIMITED
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting of the above-named Company will be held at the Cadilla Hotel, 111, Strand, London, WC2R 0BN, on Friday, 27th February 1998, at 10.00 am. The business to be transacted at the meeting is as follows:—

(a) To receive and consider the accounts and reports of the directors for the year ended 31st December 1997 and to approve the same.

(b) To elect directors in place of those retiring, and to determine the remuneration of the directors.

(c) To elect auditors in place of those retiring, and to determine the remuneration of the auditors.

(d) To transact any other business that may lawfully be brought before the meeting.

The above-named Company is a company limited by guarantee and is registered in England. The registered office of the company is at the Cadilla Hotel, 111, Strand, London, WC2R 0BN.

By Order of the Board
23, Abchurch Lane, London, EC4N 3DF, England.

WELLSBROOK SERVICES LIMITED
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting of the above-named Company will be held at the Wellsbrook Hotel, 100, Strand, London, WC2R 0BN, on Friday, 27th February 1998, at 10.00 am. The business to be transacted at the meeting is as follows:—

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By Order of the Board
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GENERAL INVESTMENT COMPANY LIMITED
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting of the above-named Company will be held at the General Investment Company, 100, Strand, London, WC2R 0BN, on Friday, 27th February 1998, at 10.00 am. The business to be transacted at the meeting is as follows:—

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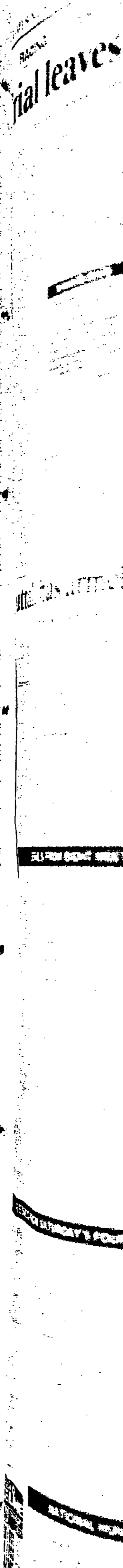
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RACING: RAMSDEN VICTORY PROMPTS REVIEW OF TERMINOLOGY EMPLOYED IN FORM BOOKS

Trial leaves racereaders lost for words

By Richard Evans, Racing Correspondent

A SIGNIFICANT change in the way the official form book records the performances of horses is likely to flow from the Ramsdens' liberal victory — and punters could be losers as a result.

Racereaders of *Raceform* and *Chaseform*, who produce the British Horseracing Board's official form book, have already been instructed to drop, for the time being, the phrase, "never placed to challenge", which was used to describe the running of Top Cees in the now celebrated Swaffham Handicap at Newmarket in 1995.

During the 19-day libel trial, which ended last week, Alan Amies, the senior racereader at *Raceform* who reported the Top Cees race, said the phrase "never placed to challenge" was one he used to describe horses which he believed were non-rioters.

David Dickinson, editorial director at *Raceform*, said yesterday that the outcome of the court case had prompted a review of the phrases used by racereaders. "Obviously, I have moved the goalposts. We have to be careful what we write as we live in the real world," he said.

"The way Alan uses 'never placed to challenge' is slightly different to the way most of us have used it. I will use the phrase not just for a horse that, in my opinion, has not tried, but also for a horse that

has been given an idiotically bad ride — either by accident or design."

A variety of coded terms are used to describe how horses run, including "never near to challenge", "never near to tenderly" or "considerably handled". Dickinson believes that racereaders will have to be more cautious in future about how they comment on a horse's running — and that will have a knock-on effect for punters.

Richard Evans
Nap: Stan's Your Man (2:20 Newcastle)

He said: "Ourselves, *Timeform*, *The Sporting Life* and *Racing Post* have all written critical things about trainers and jockeys and the way they have been ridden — but it has all really been done in defence of the punter. If the law is going to take that defence away, it will hit punter confidence."

The way to keep punter confidence is for the stewards to give any benefit of the doubt to punters rather than trainers and jockeys.

Trainers and jockeys won't like that, but I do not see any alternative unless we go out on a limb and risk the same kind of legal action against us."

However, not all specialised racing publications share that view and Geoff Gretham, a director of *Timeform*, insisted yesterday that the outcome of the libel trial held no implications for the Halifax-based company.

Although *Timeform* also uses the phrase, "never placed to challenge", Gretham stressed that his racereaders "use words strictly according to their dictionary definition".

He said: "Never placed to challenge, in our case, would mean that the horse was never placed to challenge — a fact — because he was never close enough or near enough to the leaders. There is no implication in that wording at *Timeform* that it is anything other than factual."

Gretham added: "When we write commentaries or anything to do with horses, our people record factually what happened to the horse. If there is any judgment to be made, we do it by saying things like, 'one to keep an eye on, one to watch out for' — but it is not meant to be missed next time. But when it comes to describing the running of horses in races, words are used in a factual context. There is no hidden meaning to any of the *Timeform* phrases."



Pipe congratulates McCoy on his record-breaking achievement at Kempton

McCoy 10-1 to reach 300

TONY MCCOY is 10-1 with William Hill to ride 600 winners this term after bettering Peter Scudamore's record for the fastest 200 winners in a season aboard *Fataliste* at Kempton on Saturday.

The champion jockey gave a typically trail-blazing ride to the Martin Pipe-trained gelding in the Voice Newspaper Adonis Juvenile

Novices' Hurdle and had his rivals struggling long before the home turn on the way to an 18-length victory over Supply And Demand. The Irishman said: "I am delighted. I would like to thank Martin Pipe and Dave Roberts, my agent, for putting me on all the right horses. I am very lucky to have done this and my target is to keep on winning."

Nuttall has armchair ride

BUTLER JOHN duly gave Rupert Nuttall an upbeat account to the week when coasting to victory at the Hursley Hambleton meeting. The nine-year-old easily disposed of three rivals at a meeting blighted by a firm ground — Spacial beat just one rival in the ladies' event — and it was ludicrous to divide the maiden and restricted races in advance of the day.

Since Christmas, rain in central southern England has been rare and it was no surprise to see so few horses in action.

It was sad also that the meeting ended on a low note when chief steward John

Sturges fell ill and was taken to hospital suffering a suspected heart attack. This reduced medical cover and the final race was abandoned with six declared horses shivering in the paddock. Sturges was said to be "stable" yesterday.

Stamina was needed at the East Cornwall, where 12 races became 13 after a division on the day. Seekin Cash, a former class hurdler, is fast making a name in pointing and won his second race for Charlotte Stucley when landing the ladies' open.

Todday also made it two out of two for the season, when beating nine rivals under

Thomas Scott in the men's open at the Tynedale meeting. Clive Storey and Val Jackson were in double form at this fixture, the former Martin Pipe-trained. The duo were competing Jackson's double when taking the ladies' open.

One of her old partners, Roly Prior, gave Mary Samworth, 25, her first winner when beating Seven Invader in the Great Middleton Ladies' Championship qualifier at the South Midlands Area Club fixture. At the North Hereford, Grimley Gale came back to form to win the men's open and reigning champion Julian Pritchard rode a double.

DETAILS FROM EIGHT MEETINGS

BURTON Market (Ramsden): Hunt: 1, Wind Force (S) J. Robinson, 11-3; 2, Wave And Moon (S) 2-3; 3, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 4, Northampton (S) 1-1; 5, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 6, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 7, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 8, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 9, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 10, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 11, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 12, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 13, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 14, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 15, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 16, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 17, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 18, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 19, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 20, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 21, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 22, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 23, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 24, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 25, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 26, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 27, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 28, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 29, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 30, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 31, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 32, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 33, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 34, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 35, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 36, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 37, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 38, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 39, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 40, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 41, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 42, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 43, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 44, Open Mind (S) 1-1; 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March on...
March on...
March on...

BASKETBALL

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP: Great Britain...
NATIONAL LEAGUE: Merit First division...
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Friday...

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct, GB. Lists basketball teams and their records.

BOWLS

HOPKINSON-ON-SEA: Great Yorkshire...
TOUR CRICKET: First day of cricket...
SUPERSPORT SERIES: Final day of four...

TIME TABLE: East Surrey RC...
WOMEN'S: East Surrey RC...
WOMEN'S: East Surrey RC...

BOXING: DORTMUND, Germany...
ATLANTIC CITY, New Jersey...
STUDIO CITY, California...
SURAT THANI, Thailand...

CRESTA RUN

ST MORITZ: The Bluebird Cup...
CRICKET: First day of cricket...
SUPERSPORT SERIES: Final day of four...

TIME TABLE: East Surrey RC...
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BOXING: DORTMUND, Germany...
ATLANTIC CITY, New Jersey...
STUDIO CITY, California...
SURAT THANI, Thailand...

FOR THE RECORD

Equal 1. D. Williams (Sheffield CC) and S. Haves (Sheffield CC) 157.00...
ROAD RACING: Dutch Primavera...
REAL TENNIS: Manchester University...

ICE HOCKEY: SUPERLEAGUE: Playoff Group A...
NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Boston 6...
LACROSSE: SHEPHERDS FRIENDLY SOCIETY...

MOTOR RALLYING: NARROW: Steve Rilly...
NORDIC SKIING: GAPPORO, Japan...

REAL TENNIS

MANCHESTER: University match...
ROAD RACING: Dutch Primavera...
REAL TENNIS: Manchester University...

ICE HOCKEY: SUPERLEAGUE: Playoff Group A...
NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Boston 6...
LACROSSE: SHEPHERDS FRIENDLY SOCIETY...

MOTOR RALLYING: NARROW: Steve Rilly...
NORDIC SKIING: GAPPORO, Japan...

SAILING

WHITEHEAD ROUND THE WORLD...
YACHTING: South Coast World Cup...
SAILING: Whitehead Round the World...

ICE HOCKEY: SUPERLEAGUE: Playoff Group A...
NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Boston 6...
LACROSSE: SHEPHERDS FRIENDLY SOCIETY...

MOTOR RALLYING: NARROW: Steve Rilly...
NORDIC SKIING: GAPPORO, Japan...

SNOOKER

DERBY: Liverpool Victoria Charity...
SNOOKER: Derby Liverpool Victoria Charity...

ICE HOCKEY: SUPERLEAGUE: Playoff Group A...
NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Boston 6...
LACROSSE: SHEPHERDS FRIENDLY SOCIETY...

MOTOR RALLYING: NARROW: Steve Rilly...
NORDIC SKIING: GAPPORO, Japan...

SQUASH

HATFIELD: Exquisite Life Super Series...
SQUASH: Hatfield Exquisite Life Super Series...

ICE HOCKEY: SUPERLEAGUE: Playoff Group A...
NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Boston 6...
LACROSSE: SHEPHERDS FRIENDLY SOCIETY...

MOTOR RALLYING: NARROW: Steve Rilly...
NORDIC SKIING: GAPPORO, Japan...

TENNIS

BATTERSEA PARK: Guards Direct Cup...
TENNIS: Battersea Park Guards Direct Cup...

ICE HOCKEY: SUPERLEAGUE: Playoff Group A...
NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Boston 6...
LACROSSE: SHEPHERDS FRIENDLY SOCIETY...

MOTOR RALLYING: NARROW: Steve Rilly...
NORDIC SKIING: GAPPORO, Japan...

RUGBY UNION

Telley's Bitter Cup...
Quarter-finals...
Semi-finals...

Telley's Bitter Cup...
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RUGBY LEAGUE

Silk Cut Challenge Cup...
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HOCKEY

Men's National League...
First division...
Second division...

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First division...
Second division...

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First division...
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SCHOOLS SPORT

Athletics: Reebok Challenge...
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SCHOOLS SPORT: Reebok Challenge...



Yevgeny Kafelnikov, of Russia, after his victory yesterday over Cedric Pioline, of France, in the final of the Guardian Direct Cup. Photograph: Andre Camara

ATHLETICS

Valencia: European Indoor...
ATHLETICS: Valencia European Indoor...

Valencia: European Indoor...
ATHLETICS: Valencia European Indoor...

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ATHLETICS: Valencia European Indoor...

GOLF

The Emirates Club: Dubai Desert...
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SNOW REPORTS

Depth (cm) Conditions Runs to resort Weather (F) Last (C) snow 1/3

Depth (cm) Conditions Runs to resort Weather (F) Last (C) snow 1/3

Depth (cm) Conditions Runs to resort Weather (F) Last (C) snow 1/3

Depth (cm) Conditions Runs to resort Weather (F) Last (C) snow 1/3

Depth (cm) Conditions Runs to resort Weather (F) Last (C) snow 1/3

Bank can recover all payments

Guinness Mahon and Co Ltd v Kensington and Chelsea London Borough Council
Before Lord Justice Morritt, Lord Justice Waller and Lord Justice Robert Walker

Judgment February 19
Where an agreement made between a local authority and a bank was beyond the powers of the local authority, the agreement was void from the start so that the bank could recover all payments it had made under the agreement to the local authority.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment dismissing an appeal by Kensington and Chelsea London Borough Council from a judgment of Mr Justice Phillips in favour of the bank, Guinness Mahon and Co Ltd.

Mr Charles Bear for the council; Mr George Leggat, QC, for the bank.

LORD JUSTICE MORRITT said that on September 23, 1982 the council agreed to borrow £5 million from a building society for a period of five years at an interest rate of 11.625 per cent per annum. Over the same period it was agreed that at the expiration of six months the bank should pay to the council sums equal to the interest payments to be made by the building society to the bank and that the council should pay to the bank interest at a floating rate on a notional loan of

£5 million for the same period. Thus, if the floating rate was less than 11.625 per cent per annum the council would receive from the bank more than it paid to the bank and vice versa.

The five-year period ended on September 22, 1987. By that date when all swaps had been allowed, the council had received from the bank £384,409 more than it had paid.

There matters might have rested but for the fact that on November 1, 1989 the Divisional Court declared, as subsequently upheld in the House of Lords in *Hazel v Hammersmith and Fulham London Borough Council* [1992] 2 AC 1, that such an agreement as the council had apparently concluded with the bank was ultra vires the council and so void from the start.

Two actions selected as test actions for the resolution of the problems arising from the invalidity of the interest rate swaps came before Mr Justice Hobbhouse in *Westdeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale v Islington London Borough Council* [1992] 1 AC 1. In the former, the period prescribed in the agreements during which such swaps should take place had not expired at the time the proceedings were commenced, and in the latter, the period specified in one of the agreements stood on its face as in the present case, expired, all relevant swaps having been duly paid before the writ was issued.

In each case the bank sought repayment of the net amount it had paid the local authority. The judge upheld the claims of the bank. In particular he refused to draw a distinction between what might be described as "open swaps" where the period prescribed in the ultra vires agreement had not expired and "closed swaps" where it had.

The present proceedings were commenced by the bank on July 26, 1993. On November 9, 1994 judgment in default of notice of intention to defend was entered for the bank.

On March 4, 1995 Mr Justice Phillips made a consent order settling the proceedings in default and, without prejudice to the council's right to appeal therefrom, substituting for it a judgment in favour of the bank in the sum of £101,781 and interest. It was against that judgment that the council appealed.

Although there were appeals in *Westdeutsche* on certain points in relation to open swaps there was none in *Sandwell* because it was settled and, therefore, no appeal in *Westdeutsche* was allowed. The present appeal was argued on the footing that it was in substance an appeal from the order of Mr Justice Hobbhouse in *Sandwell* in so far as it related to a closed swap.

It was clear from the judgment of Mr Justice Hobbhouse as a whole that he found for the banks on two grounds: money had been received and the equitable right to sue. In *Westdeutsche* the Court of Appeal [1994] 1 WLR 938 decided, quite separately from their conclusion on the claim on equitable grounds, that the bank was entitled to succeed in its claim on the ground of money had and received on the basis of a total failure of

consideration notwithstanding that in one sense consideration was given by the local authority in performing its part of the swap.

The House of Lords [1996] AC 699 disagreed with Mr Justice Hobbhouse and the Court of Appeal in respect of the bank's claim on equitable grounds. Although the claim in respect of money had and received was not in issue the decisions of the courts below in that respect were evidently approved.

His Lordship had referred to the course of the proceedings in *Westdeutsche* to demonstrate that the true basis for the recovery by the bank of the net amount it paid to the local authority which had no capacity to enter into the swap agreement was for money had and received as on a total failure of consideration.

Except for the decision of Mr Justice Hobbhouse in *Sandwell* all those conclusions were reached in the case of an open swap whereas the present case concerned a closed swap. Mr Bear submitted that that made all the difference.

One principle clearly established by the Court of Appeal in *Westdeutsche* was that in the case of a contract which contained a consideration justifying the remedy of money had and received or restitution for unjust enrichment.

If partial performance of that assumed obligation in the case of an open swap did not preclude a total failure of that consideration

then there was no basis on which complete performance of a closed swap could do so.

His Lordship agreed with Mr Justice Hobbhouse that there was no principle which could justify drawing a distinction between a closed swap and an open swap.

His Lordship's reasons could be summarised in the following propositions:

- 1 A contract which was ultra vires one of the parties to it was and always had been devoid of any legal effect.
- 2 Payments made in purported performance thereof were necessarily made for a consideration which had totally failed and were therefore recoverable as money had and received.
- 3 A party to an apparent swap contract which was void because ultra vires one party was entitled so to recover the amount by which what he had paid exceeded what he had received, whether or not the apparent contract had been completely performed, for there was a total failure of consideration whether it was regarded as entire or severable.
- 4 The fact that the swap contract, although ultra vires and void, had been fully performed did not constitute a defence or bar to the recovery of the net payment as money had and received for the recipient had no more right to receive or retain the payment at the conclusion of the contract than he did before.

Lord Justice Waller and Lord Justice Robert Walker delivered concurring judgments.

Solicitors: Mr A. G. Phillips, Kensington; Norton Rose.

Subrogation remedy for unjust enrichment

Banque Financière de la Cité v Parc (Battersea) Ltd and Others
Before Lord Steyn, Lord Griffiths, Lord Hoffmann, Lord Clyde and Lord Hutton

Judgment February 26
Subrogation as a restitutionary remedy did not depend upon the common or unilateral intentions of the parties. The remedy was available where a defendant would be enriched at a plaintiff's expense and such enrichment would be unjust and where there were no policy reasons for denying the remedy. However, intention could be highly relevant in deciding whether or not the enrichment had been unjust.

The House of Lords so held when unanimously allowing an appeal by the plaintiffs, Banque Financière de la Cité (BFC), from a decision of the Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Beldam, Lord Justice Morritt and Lord Justice Mummery) on November 29, 1996 allowing an appeal by the second defendants, Omnium Overseas Ltd (OOL), from a decision dated December 1, 1995 of Mr Justice Robert Walker who declared that BFC were entitled to the benefit of a first charge over the property of the first defendants, Parc (Battersea) Ltd.

Mr David Oliver, QC and Mr Mark Cunningham for BFC; Mr Leslie Kosmin, QC and Mr Andrew Thompson for OOL.

LORD STEYN said that the dispute arose out of the short term refinancing by BFC, a Swiss bank, of part of an existing bank loan made available by Royal Trust Bank (Switzerland) (RTB) to Parc for the purpose of buying development land at Battersea Wharf in London.

Parc was part of the Omni Group of companies which was controlled by Mr Werner Rey, a Swiss national. The ultimate holding company was Omni Holding AG. Mr Marous Herzog was general manager of Holding.

The refinancing transaction was negotiated in October 1990 by Mr Rey and Mr Herzog. In order to avoid a disclosure obligation on BFC under the Swiss Federal Banking Regulations the transaction was restructured by imposing Mr Herzog as the immediate borrower.

BFC lent DM30 million to Mr Herzog who arranged for the sterling equivalent of that sum to be paid direct to Parc in reduction of its loan from RTB. At BFC's request Mr Herzog handed a signed letter of postponement on Holding's letterhead to BFC stating that all companies in the Omni Group would not demand repayment of loans granted to Parc until the full repayment of BFC's loan. Parc issued to Mr Herzog a

promissory note for the relevant sum and Mr Herzog assigned the note to BFC.

The Omni Group collapsed in April 1991 and Parc was now insolvent. BFC obtained judgment for £12 million, representing the sum due on the note with interest, against Parc.

RTB and OOL, a company incorporated in the British Virgin Islands, respectively had first and second charges over the Battersea Wharf property. OOL was a company in the Omni Group and its second charge related to an intra-group debt.

OOL obtained judgment for £30 million against Parc. OOL and Parc contended that by reason of the second charge the debt owed to OOL took priority over BFC's debt. In his Lordship's view, and for the reasons given by Lord Hoffmann, BFC was entitled to succeed against OOL.

LORD HOFFMANN said that the striking feature of the case which distinguished it from familiar cases on subrogation was that BFC did not contemplate that Parc would provide it with any security at all, and was content to be an unsecured creditor.

What was contemplated was a negative form of protection from certain of Parc's other creditors, namely other companies in the group, that they would not enforce any claims they might have against Parc in priority to those of BFC.

OOL's submission which found favour in the Court of Appeal was that to allow BFC to be subrogated to the first charge would mean giving it far greater security than it ever bargained for.

The subject of subrogation was bedevilled by problems of terminology and classification which were calculated to cause confusion.

For example, it was often said that subrogation might arise from the express or implied agreement of the parties or by operation of law in a number of different situations. But the term was also used to describe an equitable remedy to reverse or prevent unjust enrichment which was not based upon any agreement or common intention of the party enriched and the party deprived.

The fact that contractual subrogation and subrogation to prevent unjust enrichment both involved transfers of rights or something resembling transfers of rights should not be allowed to obscure the fact that one was dealing with radically different institutions. One was part of the law of contract and the other part of the law of restitution.

Unless that distinction was clearly borne in mind, there was a danger that the contractual requirement of mutual consent would be imported into the conditions for the grant of the

restitutionary remedy or that the absence of such a requirement would be dispensed by reference to a presumed intention which was wholly fictitious.

In the present case there was plainly no common intention between OOL, the party enriched, and BFC, the party deprived. OOL had no knowledge of the postponement letter or reason to believe that the advance to Parc of the money provided by BFC was anything other than unsecured.

But why should that necessarily exclude subrogation as a restitutionary remedy? The following authorities demonstrated the contrary: *Cherwood v Allen* [1959] 1 Ch 353; *Butler v Rice* [1910] 2 Ch 271; *Ghana Commercial Bank v Chandiram* [1960] AC 732; *Paul v Spierway Ltd* [1970] Ch 220; *Spoornen v Bajpa* [1996] 1 WLR 328.

Those cases showed that it was a mistake to regard the availability of subrogation as a remedy to prevent unjust enrichment as turning entirely upon the question of intention, whether common or unilateral.

It should be recognised that one was here concerned with a restitutionary remedy and the appropriate questions were therefore: 1 Whether the defendant would be enriched at the plaintiff's expense; 2 Whether such enrichment would be unjust; and 3 Whether there were nevertheless reasons of policy for denying a remedy.

In the absence of subrogation OOL would be enriched at BFC's expense and prima facie such enrichment would be unjust. BFC advanced the money upon the mistaken assumption that it was obtaining a postponement letter which would be effective to give it priority over any intra-group indebtedness.

BFC failed to obtain that priority, which was an essential part of the condition of the transaction under which it paid the money. The result of the transaction was that BFC's money had been used to reduce the debt secured by RTB's first charge and that reduction would, by reason of OOL's second charge, accrue wholly to the latter's advantage.

Subrogation, as against OOL, which was all that BFC claimed, would not give it greater rights than it bargained for. All that would happen was that OOL would be prevented from being able to enrich itself to the extent that BFC's money paid off the RTB charge. That was fully within the scope of the equitable remedy.

Lord Griffiths agreed and Lord Clyde and Lord Hutton delivered concurring judgments.

Solicitors: Forsyte Saunders Kerman; Cameron McKenna.

Length of residence for capital gains tax relief

Goodwin v Curtis (Inspector of Taxes)
Before Lord Justice Millett, Lord Justice Schiemann and Sir Brian Neill

Judgment February 18
The question whether a taxpayer occupied a dwelling-house as his "only or main residence" and accordingly qualified for private residence relief from capital gains tax under sections 101 and 102 of the Capital Gains Tax Act 1979, was a matter of fact and degree requiring the exercise of his ordinary English meaning something more than temporary occupation.

Accordingly, general commissioners who denied relief to a taxpayer who occupied a farmhouse for five weeks after the property had been placed on the market, had not erred.

The Court of Appeal so held dismissing an appeal by the taxpayer, Charles Paul Goodwin, against the dismissal by Sir John Vinelott, sitting as a judge of the Chancery Division (*The Times* August 14, 1996) of his taxpayer's appeal against the determination of Chancery general commissioners that private residence relief, under sections 101 and 102 of the 1979 Act, was not available in respect of the gain accruing on the sale of Hazleton Manor

Farmhouse.

Section 101 of the 1979 Act, read with section 102, provided for relief on a gain accruing to an individual on the disposal of a private residence being: "... a dwelling-house or part of a dwelling-house which is, or has at any time in his period of ownership been, his only or main residence..."

Mr David Stewart for the taxpayer; Mr Timothy Brennan for the Crown.

LORD JUSTICE MILLETT said that in September 1983 a company, Sandwell Ltd, entered into a contract for the purchase of the farmhouse. The taxpayer, a property dealer, was a shareholder in that company.

On September 21, 1983 he entered into a contract for the purchase of the farmhouse, a nine-bedroomed property, from the company. At the time he lived elsewhere. The company completed the purchase in March 1985. Before the sale to the taxpayer was completed on April 1, he instructed his agents to sell the property.

On April 1, the taxpayer separated from his wife and family and moved into occupation of the farmhouse. He lived and slept there seven days a week using furniture from a former residence and the previous owner. A telephone was connected and used.

On April 11 the farmhouse was advertised for sale, a purchaser was found and a completion took place on May 3, when the taxpayer moved out.

The only question was whether the farmhouse was the taxpayer's only or main residence during the months from April 1 to May 3, 1985 when he occupied it as a dwelling-house.

In the case stated the commissioners accepted the Crown's contention that in order to qualify for the relief a taxpayer had to provide evidence that his residence at a property showed some degree of permanence, some degree of continuity or some expectation of continuity.

They reviewed *Kirkby v Hughes* (1992) 65 TC 523, which was concerned with the different question whether a taxpayer was living in a property, from time to time and sold a dwelling-house, and noted the requirement of permanent residence; and they accepted that the taxpayer did not intend to occupy the farmhouse as his permanent residence.

It was important not to construe the commissioners' case stated with too microscopic a degree of precision. By the reference to "permanent residence" the commissioners were to be taken to have accepted the Crown's submission that the quality of the

taxpayer's residence did not have a sufficient degree of permanence or continuity or expectation of continuity to justify a description as residence and that the taxpayer moved into the farmhouse on a temporary basis.

It was submitted for the taxpayer that that test, taken from *Far* when he occupied it as a dwelling-house, was wrong.

The classic exposition of "residence" was to be found in the speech of Viscount Cave, Lord Chancellor, in *Lever v IRC* [1928] AC 217, 222 that "... the word is a familiar English word and is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as meaning 'to dwell permanently or for a considerable time, to have one's settled or usual abode, to live in or at a particular place'."

It was submitted for the taxpayer that that test was not appropriate to capital gains tax legislation.

His Lordship was not sure that he agreed. What his Lordship derived from that speech was that "residence" was an ordinary word of the English language and required an approach which was suitable for a lay tribunal to consider.

The question was simply whether in the five weeks that the taxpayer occupied the farmhouse, he occupied it as his temporary accommodation or as his settled abode, his residence.

The commissioners had found that it was temporary accommodation and that the occupation was not of a sufficient degree of permanence, continuity or expectation of continuity to describe it as his residence. There was ample evidence for that view.

The nature, quality, length and circumstances of occupation here did not make the occupation qualify as residence. That was a conclusion open to them and his Lordship did not adopt any other glosses on the words of the statute.

LORD JUSTICE SCHIEMANN, agreeing, said that he accepted the Crown's submission that to qualify for relief the taxpayer had to provide evidence that his occupation showed some degree of permanence, some degree of continuity or some expectation of continuity.

Sir Brian Neill agreed.

Solicitors: Eric Robinson & Co; Solicitor of Inland Revenue.

Procedure outweighed planning flaw

Berkeley v Secretary of State for the Environment and Another
Before Lord Justice Nourse, Lord Justice Pill and Lord Justice Thorpe

Judgment February 12
On the hearing of an application by Fulham Football Club for planning permission to redevelop Craven Cottage, Fulham, by the Secretary of State for the Environment to consider the need for an environmental statement before granting the application, was a breach of regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations (SI 1988 No 1199).

But the planning procedures adopted at the hearing, although flawed, were thorough and effective, enabling judgment to be made on all the environmental issues including encroachment into the River Thames, and the planning permission was not to be quashed in accordance with the provisions of section 288(8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The Court of Appeal so held in reserved judgments dismissing an appeal by Lady Dido Berkeley from the judgment of Mr Justice Tucker in April 1997 declining to quash the planning permission granted by the secretary of state to Fulham Football Club in August 1996.

Regulation 4 of the 1988 Regulations provides: "(2) The local planning authority or the secretary of state or an inspector shall not grant planning permission pursuant to an application to which this regulation applies unless they have first taken the environmental information into consideration..."

Section 288 of the 1990 Act provides: "(8) On any application under this section the High Court ... (b) if satisfied that the order or action in question is not within the powers of this Act ... may quash that order or action."

Mr Robert McCracken and Mr Gregory Jones for Lady Berkeley; Mr David Elvin and Mr Stephen Richards for the secretary of state; Mr W. D. A. Hicks, QC and Mr Matthew Reed for Fulham Football Club.

LORD JUSTICE PILL said the club played at a ground alongside the Thames. It sought permission for the development to provide improved accommodation at the ground with 142 flats and a riverside walk.

Its application had been referred to the secretary of state for decision. Lady Berkeley had applied under section 288 of the 1990 Act to quash his decision granting the permission.

It was common ground that the proposed development involved an encroachment into the river. The inspector appointed by the secretary of state to conduct the inquiry had stated that river ecology would be disturbed but measures could be taken to offset that disruption.

The inspector had referred to environmental policies but not to Hammersmith and Fulham's policy ENZ1 Nature Conservation Areas, which included the Thames

with its foreshore, on which Lady Berkeley relied. One criticism was that no environmental statement had been required of the club and the proposed development was or could have been an urban development project requiring such a statement pursuant to Council Directive 85/337/EEC (EU 1985 No 175 p4) because it was likely to have significant effects on the environment.

For the secretary of state, it was conceded that consideration should have been given and was not given to requiring an environmental statement before the planning application was determined.

Regulation 25 of the 1988 Regulations provided that the references in section 288 of the 1990 Act to action of the secretary of state which was not within the powers of the Act, included a grant of planning permission in contravention of regulation 4.

There had been a breach of regulation 4(2). Had the point been considered, there was a real prospect that the secretary of state would have required an environmental statement. However, the court had a discretion under section 288, notwithstanding the absence of a statement, to decline to quash a decision.

In deciding whether the decisions should be quashed, it was necessary to consider the procedure as a whole and the information available to the court concerned with the proposed development.

The inspector's report revealed that the issues had been fully considered at the inquiry. Lady Berkeley had given evidence. The

river and its habitat had been subject to debate. It did not appear to have occurred to anyone at the inquiry to request an environmental statement.

The failure to provide such a statement could not have had any effect on the course of events: nor was it prejudicial to objectors or to the quality of the decision.

A vast amount of information had been available and in a comprehensive form. The absence of a statement was of no significant practical importance in the circumstances of the case and the judge's conclusion was correct.

LORD JUSTICE THORPE, concurring, said that Mr McCracken had successfully demonstrated a breach in the procedure by which the planning consent had been achieved. However, although the failure to take into account or make any reference to policy ENZ1 was regrettable, its consequences were minimal.

The failure by the secretary of state to consider the need to prepare an environmental statement was more substantial. It demonstrated a breach of regulation 4(2).

The judge had made light of that complaint. He had been wrong to do so.

However, the procedures adopted, although flawed, had been thorough and effective to enable the inspector to make a comprehensive judgment on all the environmental issues.

Lord Justice Nourse agreed.

Solicitors: Richard Buxton, Cambridge; Treasury Solicitor; Herbert Smith.

State immunity blocks mother's claim

P v P (Diplomatic immunity: Jurisdiction)
Before Sir Stephen Brown

Judgment January 22
The action of removing children from the jurisdiction at the end of a diplomatic posting could not be construed as an act performed in the exercise of a diplomat's functions within article 39(2) of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961 (Cmd 2563), scheduled to the Diplomatic Privileges Act 1964.

However, state immunity was a different concept and an agent could enjoy immunity in respect of his acts if they were of a sovereign or governmental nature.

In the instant case, as the father's request to the United States with his family was done in compliance with a direct order of his government, it was an act of a governmental nature and therefore subject to state immunity from legal process.

Sir Stephen Brown, President of the Family Division, so held on a preliminary hearing to determine

whether diplomatic and/or state immunity should preclude the English court from exercising jurisdiction to decide the issues raised by the plaintiff mother when setting aside the originating summons whereby she sought a declaration under section 8 of the Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985, that the removal of the children from the jurisdiction was a wrongful removal within the meaning and terms of article 3 of the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction 1980, set out in Schedule 1 to the Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985, on the ground that the United States Government and their employee, the defendant father, were immune from the jurisdiction of the court.

Mr Christopher Greenwood for the United States government and the father; Mr Peter Duffy, QC and Mr Henry Stright for the mother; Mr David Lloyd Jones as amicus curiae.

THE PRESIDENT said that the father, a member of the diplomatic corps, had lived with his family in London for the duration of his posting to the United Kingdom.

Shortly before their departure from London the mother started divorce proceedings in her own country of origin and applied for residence orders in respect of the children pursuant to the provisions of the Children Act 1989, in London. Those proceedings were set aside on the ground of diplomatic immunity.

During a succession of hearings concerning, inter alia, jurisdiction and custody in various courts and jurisdictions, the father returned to the United States.

His Lordship said that diplomatic privileges and immunities were functional in character, their purpose being to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of diplomatic missions as representing states, not to benefit individual diplomats.

Hence actions of a personal nature, performed at the end of a diplomatic posting, could not be considered to be an act performed in the exercise of a diplomat's functions within article 39(2) of the Vienna Convention.

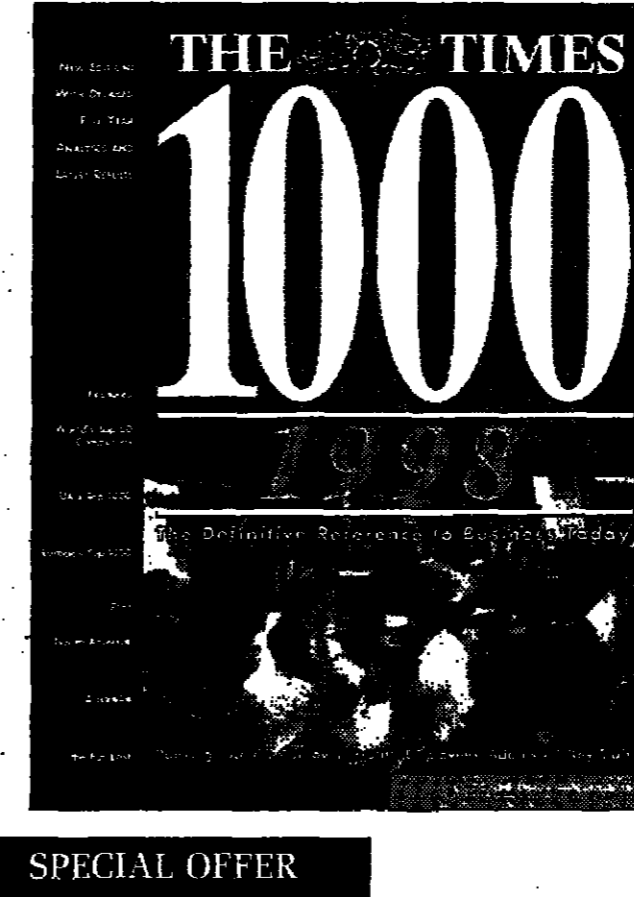
However, state immunity was a different concept. An agent could enjoy immunity in respect of his acts if they were of a sovereign or governmental nature.

Here the return of the agent and his family to the United States of America was done in compliance with the direct order of the United States government, his employer. It was an act of a governmental nature and therefore subject to state immunity from legal process.

Solicitors: Clifford Chance; Dawson Cornwell & Co; Treasury Solicitor.

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Revamp

Capitalisation, week's change

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Table listing alcoholic beverage stocks such as AB InBev, Carlsberg, and Heineken with their respective prices and changes.

BANKS

Table listing bank stocks including HSBC, Citigroup, and Royal Bank of Canada.

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

Table listing brewery and pub stocks such as Asahi, Heineken, and Wm. S. Healy.

BUILDING MATERIALS

Table listing building materials stocks like Bunnings and Home Depot.

CHEMICALS

Table listing chemical stocks including BASF and Dow Chemical.

CONSTRUCTION

Table listing construction stocks such as Bechtel and Fluor Daniel.

DISTRIBUTORS

Table listing distributor stocks like Amazon and eBay.

1000 EQUITY

Table listing 1000 equity stocks including various large-cap companies.

1000 EQUITY

Table listing 1000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

1000 EQUITY

Table listing 1000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

1000 EQUITY

Table listing 1000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

1000 EQUITY

Table listing 1000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Table listing investment trusts such as Fidelity and Vanguard funds.

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

Table listing engineering and vehicle stocks like Ford and General Motors.

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

Table listing food manufacturer stocks such as Unilever and Nestle.

HEALTHCARE

Table listing healthcare stocks including Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS & TEXT

Table listing household goods and textile stocks like H&M and Zara.

2000 EQUITY

Table listing 2000 equity stocks including various mid-cap companies.

2000 EQUITY

Table listing 2000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

2000 EQUITY

Table listing 2000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

2000 EQUITY

Table listing 2000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

2000 EQUITY

Table listing 2000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

3000 EQUITY

Table listing 3000 equity stocks including various large-cap companies.

3000 EQUITY

Table listing 3000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

3000 EQUITY

Table listing 3000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

3000 EQUITY

Table listing 3000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

3000 EQUITY

Table listing 3000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

4000 EQUITY

Table listing 4000 equity stocks including various large-cap companies.

4000 EQUITY

Table listing 4000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

4000 EQUITY

Table listing 4000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

4000 EQUITY

Table listing 4000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

4000 EQUITY

Table listing 4000 equity stocks, continuing from the previous section.

OTHER FINANCIAL

Table listing other financial stocks like insurance and investment firms.

MEDIA

Table listing media stocks such as News Corp and Time Warner.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Table listing pharmaceutical stocks including AstraZeneca and Novartis.

PRINTING & PAPER

Table listing printing and paper stocks like International Paper.

PROPERTY

Table listing property stocks such as REITs and real estate firms.

RETAILERS, GENERAL

Table listing general retailers like Tesco and Sainsbury.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Table listing support services stocks like logistics and IT firms.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

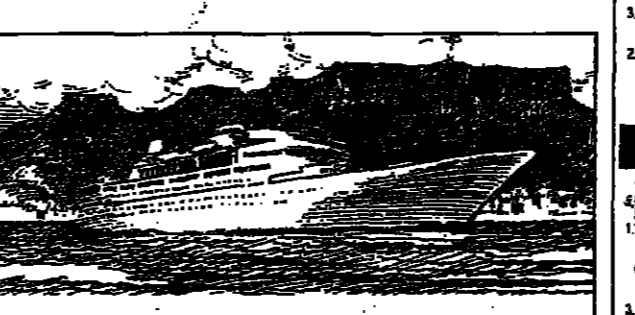
Table listing telecommunications stocks like BT and Vodafone.

TRANSPORT

Table listing transport stocks such as airlines and shipping lines.

WATER

Table listing water utility stocks like Thames Water and Severn-Trent.



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UNION-CASTLE LINE CENTENARY VOYAGE

Table listing various British funds with their names, prices, and performance metrics.

SHORTS (under 5 years)

Table listing short-term investments and bonds.

LONGS (over 15 years)

Table listing long-term investments and bonds.

MEDIAN (5 to 15 years)

Table listing medium-term investments and bonds.

RETAILERS, FOOD

Table listing food retailers like Asda and Morrisons.

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

Table listing alternative investment market stocks like hedge funds and private equity.

Handwritten signatures and notes at the bottom right of the page.

Revamp crucial as BTR banks on disposals

BTR: The company is close to the sale of its packaging operations to Owens Illinois, the American glass packaging manufacturer, for around £1 billion and may announce an agreement on Thursday when it reports year-end results.

After five profit warnings in the space of three years, the results on Thursday are likely to contain few surprises. Brokers forecast a downturn in pre-tax profits from £1.3 billion to £1.09 billion with earnings per share down almost 20 per cent to 18.3p. But brokers keenly await news of the group's restructuring programme.

In September the board announced plans to dispose of £3 billion worth of businesses to restore growth in earnings. All the non-engineering parts of the conglomerate were to be sold off. Brokers say that the scale of the dilution created by the disposals and the subsequent enhancement from the proposed buyback programme will make the calculation of earnings difficult. However, most seem agreed that margins will be hit. The dividend will be pegged at 9.6p a share.

ZENECA: The flurry of speculative activity created by the abortive merger talks between Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham will heighten interest in Thursday's full-year results. Pre-tax profits are expected to show modest growth, with brokers looking for around £1.1 billion, compared with £1.01 billion last time, while earnings grow around 9 per cent to 77p. The company has already indicated that new drugs are meeting expectations, though there have been delays in the launch of some drugs. The dividend should rise from 35p a share to 38p.

HALIFAX: A complicated picture is likely to emerge when the UK's biggest mortgage lender reports its first full-year figures since it became a bank. The City will be looking for some indication that the Halifax intends to return some of its £3.5 billion surplus capital, as well as maintaining a strong grip on costs. The mortgage business is likely to have suffered a poor second half, as borrowers switch lenders after receiving their windfall shares, and interest margins are narrowing. Nevertheless, brokers forecast a 15 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £1.64 billion and earnings per share of 44.2p. Expect a final payout of about 17.5p.

CADBURY SCHWEPPE: The shares have been buoyed by the recent bonding agreement with Coca-Cola and the acquisition of two American bottling businesses, but final results on Wednesday, are likely to reveal a downturn in pre-tax profits from £592 million to £570 million, although earnings per share should be up 7 per cent to 37p. The dividend will rise to 13p.

ROYAL & SUN ALLIANCE: Soon to be acquired as the UK's biggest composite insurer by the proposed merger of Commercial Union and General Accident, the group will report its first results under the stewardship of Bob Mendelsohn, the new chief executive. Analysts forecast pre-tax operating profits of between £860 million and £900 million, up from £706 million, with a dividend of 21p. They will look for signs of a change in strategy under Mr Mendelsohn, particularly on plans to expand into Europe. Life profits are likely to be up by as much as 10 per cent, but the underwriting



Ian Strachan, chief executive, is selling businesses to restore earnings growth at BTR

result is expected to be hit by higher claims. The group was also exposed to the volcano disaster on the Caribbean island of Montserrat. The storms last December are likely to mean a £50 million hit. In addition, currency movements are

likely to have wiped 25 per cent off investment gains.

ENTERPRISE OIL: The slump in the oil price left its mark on Lascro last week and will have a similar impact on Enterprise's finals on Thursday. Net income should be down at between £100 million and £105 million, against £142.5 million last time. The decline in earnings is likely to be almost 40 per cent at 16p. However, the dividend will rise about 6 per cent to 18p.

LADBROKE GROUP: Strong performances from European hotels and bookmaking should boost full-year figures on Thursday. Pre-tax profits are forecast to grow from £163 million to between £215 million and £230 million. Earnings should rise from 10.4p to 14.3p. Brokers will no doubt require an update on the link-up between Ladbroke and Hilton Hotels Corporation. But the Asian crisis will be of concern, given the Hilton chain's exposure to the region. The dividend should rise from 6.2p to 6.7p.

COOKSON GROUP: Disposals have been made and debt reduced, but it remains an uphill struggle for the industrial materials group. Currency transactions and the Asian crisis will have left their mark on full-year results due on Wednesday. Pre-tax profits are expected to show a modest increase, coming in at around £177 million compared with £166 million last time. Earnings will improve from 16.9p to around 18.5p.

The group is keen to make acquisitions to bolster the core business but brokers say the group may choose to repay around £50 million to shareholders until the outlook for the electronics industry becomes clearer. The payout is likely to grow from 8.6p to 8.9p.

HAYS: First-time contributions from acquisitions should produce a useful rise in half-year figures on Wednesday. Forecasts range between £80 million and £95 million, compared with £71.7 million for the corresponding period, with earnings up around 20 per cent to 14.7p a share. After stripping out currency factors, investment in information technology, and acquisitions, underlying profits are likely to be flat. Once again the strongest performance will come from personnel with distribution

showing only modest growth while commercial will make another useful contribution. Shareholders should expect a dividend increase of around 15 per cent to 3.5p.

BICC: Little sign of improvement will be evident from the core cables business when final results are recorded on Wednesday. But the outlook for Balfour Beatty is likely to prove encouraging. Pre-tax profits should show a further downturn from £129 million to between £115 million and £100 million. Earnings will have declined by around 30 per cent to 9p a share. NatWest Markets, the broker, believes that a cut in the dividend cannot be avoided. Analyst Andrew Bryant has cut his forecast from 12.4p a share to 8.5p.

THISTLE HOTELS: The group is still searching for a new chief executive to succeed Robert Peel. Pre-tax profits on Tuesday are expected to come in at between £70 million and £85 million, against £66.7 million last time. Earnings are forecast at 12.7p a share with a 4.2p dividend. There is talk the group may introduce a new accounting policy designed to bring its depreciation policy in line with others in the sector.

ROLLS-ROYCE: At first sight full-year results on Thursday, should make pleasant reading, with pre-tax profits up from £220 million to useful rise in half-year figures on Wednesday. Forecasts range between £265 million and £275 million. Civil engine deliveries grew from 346 in 1996 to 500 last year, but as indicated at the half-year stage, margins are likely to have remained under pressure. Much of the profit improvement will have come from high-margin engine spares. Earnings will be up from 12.7p to 14.5p. The payout should grow from 5.3p to 5.9p.

MICHAEL CLARK

City holds breath as MPC considers rates

ALL eyes in the UK will be on the monetary policy committee meeting taking place on Thursday and Friday. The City believes the decision is too close to call but with the Budget due and Eddie George apparently adopting a dovish tone about the outlook for inflation, the MPC may choose to pass again on a rate rise.

There is only a smattering of UK data throughout the week which is unlikely to greatly shift the terms of the economic debate. Consumer credit growth figures, to be published on Monday, are expected to ease back after a strong rise in December. MMS International, the economics consultancy group, predicts credit will rise by £1 billion compared with £1.3 billion the previous month. The measure of narrow money supply, M0, is forecast to remain stable at an annual growth rate of 6.9 per cent.

The CBI distributive trades survey on Thursday will provide the first snapshot of retail

sales performance in February. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the huge sales growth in January, prompted by heavy discounting, is unlikely to be repeated. Other data during the week includes the Chartered Institute of Purchasing Managers' service sector survey on Wednesday, which will provide details on the recent performance of this booming sector.

ALASDAIR MURRAY

Sunday Times: Buy Energy Group, Rolls-Royce, Marston, Shell, Shell Oil, Linat, Sell Cammell Laird.
Sunday Telegraph: Buy Lloyds, Northern Recruitment Group, Westwood Energy, Logica, Compec Holdings, Gartland Whalley & Barker, Sell Merchant Retail.
Sunday Express: Buy Abbott, Standard Chartered, Vardon, Eidos, Hold Eidos, Norwich Union, Ryland.

	Bank	Bank	Bank	Bank
	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.52	2.56	Meta	0.898
Australia \$	21.58	20.30	Meta	2.551
Belgium F	54.70	53.74	New Zealand \$	2.96
Canada \$	2.408	2.278	Norway N	13.04
Cyprus Cyp	0.917	0.946	Portugal P	317.79
Denmark K	11.85	11.08	S Africa R	8.84
Denmark K	8.25	8.88	Spain P	284.35
France F	10.47	9.89	Sweden K	13.87
Germany Dm	3.14	2.90	Switzerland F	2.57
France F	498	480	Turkey L	363.67
Hong Kong \$	13.59	12.38	USA \$	1.705
India R	151	111		1.612
Japan Y	1.28	1.17		
Italy L	8.29	5.84		
Italy L	3113	2876		
Japan Y	22.83	205.00		

CHANGE ON WEEK

US dollar: 1.8457 (+0.0098)
German mark: 2.9879 (+0.0063)
Exchange index: 105.1 (+0.2)
Bank of England official close (4pm)

FT 30 share: 3551.4 (+49.8)
FTSE 100: 5767.3 (+15.7)
New York Dow Jones: 8545.72 (+131.78)
Tokyo Nikkei Avg: 16831.67 (+75.43)

TODAY

Interims: Bilton, Brit Allcott Co, Brunner Mond, Cantab Pharmaceuticals, Domestic & General, European Leisure, Optoplast, Tatra.
Finals: British Polythene, Graham Group, Inchcape, Lillieshall, Millennium & Cophorne Hotels, Wharfedale.
Economics: UK net new consumer credit (Jan), UK provisional M0 (Feb), UK first half money supply (Jan), UK Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply manufacturing sector survey (Feb).

TOMORROW

Interims: S Lykes, Northern Recruitment, Ricardo Group.
Finals: CRI, Delight Group, Epwin Group, Halifax, Hampden Group, Kerry Group, Partco Group, Scottish Eastern Investment Trust, Spring Rain Corp, Thistle Hotels, Trafalgar.
Economics: UK Halifax house price survey (Feb), US leading economic indicators (Jan).

WEDNESDAY

Interims: Hays.
Finals: Associated British Ports, BICC, Cadbury Schweppes, Cookson Group, Fidelity Japan Values, Fife, Hickson International, Ica International, Metal Bulletin, MicroFocus Group, Pylon, Seroo Group, Spargo Consulting, Stat-Sys Group, Vickers.
Economics: UK Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply services sector survey (Feb), Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee meeting starts.

THURSDAY

Interims: Brierley Investments, Gaillard, Renishaw, Sheffield, Unilever.
Finals: BTR, Enterprise Oil, Hanson, Ladbroke Group, More Group, NSB Retail Systems, Ocean Group, Rolls-Royce, Royal & Sun Alliance, Sanderson Bramell, Select Appointments, Stafford, Zenecca.
Economics: UK new construction orders (Jan), UK housing starts (Jan), UK Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders new car registrations (Feb), UK CBI distributive trades survey (Feb), UK Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee interest rate decision.

FRIDAY

Interims: none scheduled.
Finals: Grege Group Trust, LHO Supplies.
Economics: UK construction output (Q4).

Answers from page 40

FEBRUATION

(4) A ceremonial purification or cleansing. *Februa* in Latin was a word of Sabine origin signifying purification. It was held on the 15th of the month that we call February. "The passing of children through fire without either staying or burning; a februation by fire."

GELDABLE

(4) Liable to pay "geld", the tax paid to the crown by English landlords before the Conquest, and continued under the Norman kings. "The very large amount at which Whidby is returned as geldable in the Domesday record."

GRIZEL

(4) Later form of the proper name *Grisside* (= *Grissidis*, *Grissida*), borne by the heroine of Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale* (adapted from a story of Petrarch's), who is the proverbial type of a meek, patient wife. "He has married five grizels in succession, and made Grizels of every one of them before he died."

FAMBLE

(4) A hand. Perhaps from the verb *to fumble* in its (probable) original sense "to grope or fumble". Walter Scott's *Guy Riddick*: "He had not helped you with these very fambles (holding up her hands)."

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

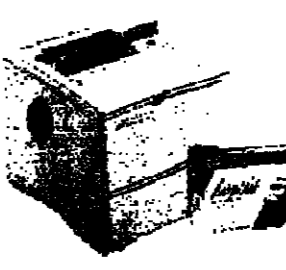
Qc3 is decisive as if 2 Qc3 Rxf3 3 Kxf3 Rb1 mates.

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are pumped out at 16ppm. All in all letting your network run smoothly and easily. But it's on day to day usage that we've really saved you time and trouble. Efficient paper handling is ensured, with up to 3 input trays that hold 1,100 sheets of A4. Link this with its 10,000 page toner cartridge and you're guaranteed a longer operating time. To make your day even less eventful we've added new HP JetSend technology. HP JetSend lets any two devices connect, interface and exchange information. That makes sharing information the simplest of tasks. For further details visit your nearest dealer or contact us on www.hp.com/peripherals. The new HP LaserJet 4000N. Plug in. Switch on. Feet up. HP Printers. Paper that works for you.



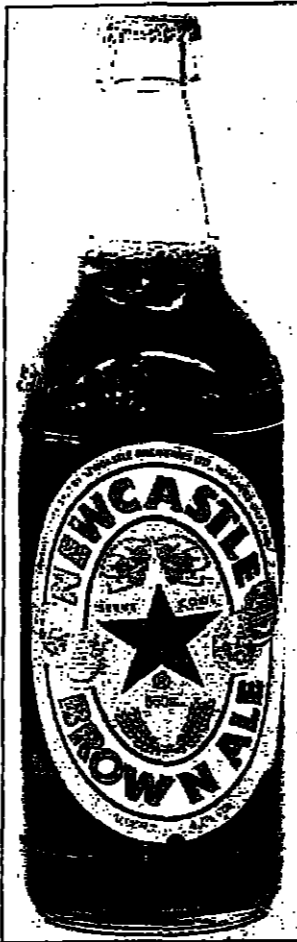
HEWLETT-PACKARD

CORPORATE PROFILE S&N

THE FACTS
 Turnover: £3.35 billion (year to April 27, 1997)
 Pre-tax profit: £374 million
 Employees: 45,000
Overview: Scottish Courage is Britain's biggest brewer; brands include John Smith's, McEwen's, Younger's, Courage, Beamish and Newcastle Brown Ale. Its retail division of about 2,600 pubs includes the Chef & Brewer and Rat & Parrot brands. It has 13 Center Parks holiday villages and 17 Pottin's centres.

THE BOARD
 Scottish & Newcastle's non-executive chairman is Sir Alistair Grant, one of the Scottish business community's best-known figures. He is a non-executive director of the Bank of Scotland, and is to become its Governor in May. He recently retired as chairman of Safeway. He succeeded Sir Alick Rankin as S&N chairman last March, having joined the board three years earlier.
 One remarkable feature about the six executive directors is their longevity. Average length of service with the company is 23 years. The principle hand on the tiller is Brian Stewart, who has been with S&N since 1976. He joined the board in 1988 as finance director, becoming chief executive in 1991. He is chairman of the Brewers & Licensed Retailers Association.
 His successor as finance director was Derek Wilkinson, who has been with the group for 25 years.
 The group personnel and services director is Henry Fairweather. He joined S&N in 1989. He is also a director of Havelock-Europa. The chairman of the leisure division is John Delgaty, a 26-year S&N veteran, while Guy Dickson, the chairman of the Scottish Courage brewing business, is a relative newcomer with just 19 years' service. Ian Hannah, chairman and managing director of S&N Retail, has been at S&N since 1979, the last ten on the board.
 The three other non-executive directors are: Neville Bain, chairman of Hogg Robinson and former chief executive of Coats Vyealla and finance director of Cadbury Schweppes; Sir Malcolm Field, chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority and former chief executive of WH Smith; Ian McAllister, chairman and managing director of Ford Motor Company of Great Britain.

Until relatively recently, Scottish & Newcastle was a regional brewer with its roots firmly embedded in the cultures of Edinburgh and Tyneside. Its best-known beer was Newcastle Brown Ale, and transforming the group into a national, let alone an international, player must have seemed like a pipedream.
 Even today, with 2,600 pubs, the pan-European Center Parks holiday business, a host of international beer brands and offices on three continents, S&N still tends to be regarded almost as a poor relation to Bass and Whitbread. Clearly the perception of an unglamorous, dyed-in-the-wool regional brewer persists.
 That image has probably been reinforced by recent takeover activity in the sector. While Brian Stewart, S&N's canny chief executive, was snapping up 311 pubs from Nomura International for £206 million, Sir Ian Prosser, chairman of Bass, was putting the finishing touches to a headline-grabbing £1.75 billion takeover of Inter-Continental Hotels. With the Holiday Inn brand already part of its stable, the acquisition makes Bass the world's leading hotel player.
 But such thoughts do not trouble Mr Stewart, whose hotel ambitions came to an end with the sale of Thistle Hotels to Mount Charlotte Investments in 1989, at what turned out to be the top of the market. Mount Charlotte's subsequent travails, culminating in the recent departure of Robert Peel, its veteran chief executive, show what a shrewd disposal that was. The reinvestment of the proceeds in Center Parks two years later also looked like a good move for a time, although the recent dip in profits shows there is much work to be done in bringing the standard of the Dutch and Belgian villages up to the standard of its three UK sites. Analysts believe that its estimated £1 billion investment in the business is now worth no more than half that figure, making a disposal highly unlikely unless it can find a property investor.
 But even after the acquisition of Center Parks, S&N was still essentially a regional brewer, albeit a rather sizeable one born from the marriage of Scottish Courage and Newcastle Breweries in 1960. It took two acquisitions to really put the group on the map as both a pub operator and a brewer: Chief & Brewer in 1993 and Courage in 1995. Both gave the



Newcastle Brown Ale is one of S&N's leading brands. Center Parc, top, is a relatively recent addition. Below, Alf Sniddy, who runs Beamish & Crawford, launching Beamish Black. Sir Alistair Grant, chairman, and Brian Stewart, right, are continuing S&N's conversion from regional brewer to international player.

company a strong presence outside its northern heartland and both gave it the basis of a national presence.
 Of course, buying things is one thing; making them work quite another. The Courage acquisition, in particular, elicited considerable scepticism among brewing analysts. Some expressed doubts about the long-term growth prospects for the UK beer market. Although the general decline in beer drinking continues, from S&N's standpoint the picture looks fairly positive: the promised cost savings have been more than achieved and most observers expect more to come.
 In the wake of the post-Courage rationalisation, S&N's brewing division, renamed Scottish Courage, has seven UK breweries and the Beamish & Crawford brewery in Cork. Although it still produces a wide range of beers, it seems likely that some smaller brands

will drop out as the bigger brands continue their meteoric rise. In the past three years the proportion of total volumes from its top six brands has risen from 45 per cent to 60 per cent. Mr Stewart expects them to account for at least 70 per cent within three years. John Smith's has long since overtaken Tetley as the biggest-selling bitter, with a 12 per cent market share, while Foster's now tops £1 billion in annual sales and is creeping up on Bass's Carling in the lager stakes. Nevertheless, Mr Stewart recognises the limitations of the

UK beer market, and is increasingly turning his mind to continental Europe. Analysts speak glowingly of S&N's ability to develop and foster relationships with the likes of Beck's and Holsten in Germany and Kronenbourg in France. Many think it is a matter of time before the group makes a significant move in the region, although an outright acquisition looks unlikely. Some sort of cross-shareholding seems more likely.
 The focus on quality brands is also evident in S&N's retail division, where its ability to roll out a range of managed concepts and generate good returns is starting to match that of Whitbread. Although it bought Chief & Brewer from GrandMet more than four years ago, the deal still offers plenty of scope for growth as S&N seeks to achieve a return on investment of more than 25 per cent. It has gone back to basics, targeting a slightly older market and serving freshly cooked food. There are currently almost 60 units trading, with plans for more than 200 by 2001, many of the sites coming from the Nomura acquisition.
 By then, S&N expects to have 2,200 managed houses — of which 65 per cent will be branded — and just 400 tenancies, which are becoming an increasingly peripheral part of the business. Mr Stewart believes that social and demographic trends, leading to longer working days and an older population with higher disposable income, are working in S&N's favour, helping pubs to regain their position as the focus for people's social lives. The challenge, he says, is to keep the product fresh.
 Mr Stewart believes these retail skills can also work on the Continent. Last week, the company opened its first man-

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

"This is an extremely well-run company that has taken big strides in the last ten years such that it is now at the forefront of both the brewing and pubs businesses."
Colin Davies, brewing and drinks analyst, Goldman Sachs

"It will have to deliver improvements in Center Parks. Brian Stewart is a canny man with very strong commercial instincts. He's not just a clever accountant."
Martin Hawkins, drinks analyst, Greig Middleton

"Strategically we have always been slightly concerned about its exposure to brewing. The recent acquisition of 311 pubs from Nomura is a very good deal."
John Beaumont, drinks analyst, Merrill Lynch

DOMINIC WALSH

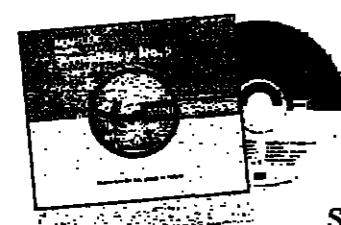
Ethical expression... 3/10
 Fat-cat quotient... 10/10
 Financial record... 7/10
 Share performance... 7/10
 Attitude to employees... 7/10
 Strength of brand... 7/10
 Innovation... 6/10
 Annual report... 9/10
 City star rating... 7/10
 Future prospects... 7/10
 Total... 69/100

Ethical expression is evaluated by Integrity Works. The fat-cat quotient, in which best boardroom pay practices scores highest, is provided by "Crisp Consulting."

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CD TRACK LISTINGS (EXTRACTS)

- Wagner** The Ride of the Valkyries (*Apocalypse Now*), Parsifal, Transformation Music from Act 1, Lohengrin, Prelude to Act 111, Die Meistersinger (Overture)
- Rachmaninov** Piano Concerto No 3 1st mvmt (*Shine*), Prelude in C sharp minor
- Mahler** Symphony No 5 (*Death in Venice*), Symphony No 7 in E minor, Symphony No 1 in D (1893 version)
- Handel** The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba (*Four Weddings and a Funeral*), Ombra mai fu, Air, Hompipe, I know that my redeemer liveth, Hallelujah Chorus
- Mozart** The Magic Flute (*Out of Africa*), Ave verum corpus, Horn Concerto No4 in E flat
- Beethoven** Symphony No 5 in C minor, Moonlight Sonata (*Howards End*), Violin Concerto in D

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THE TIMES
 MINI CLASSICS
 TOKEN 1



Hugh Grant and Andie MacDowell in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and below left, Geoffrey Rush in *Shine*



CHANGING TIMES

Handwritten signatures and notes at the bottom right of the page.

AIM's ability to support growth of young firms called into question

Drug company swallows dilution of interests

Oxford BioMedica has joined the select group of companies to have raised two rounds of finance on AIM. The £6 million announced last Thursday will enable the gene therapy company to continue work on its cancer and AIDS treatments until the end of next year...

young companies, and particularly of speculative high-technology ventures. Professor Kingsman says: "If we are too early for AIM then AIM has no role for a biotechnology company. If it's too early for AIM, then what the hell is AIM for?"

BioMedica has established its laboratories, recruited all but a handful of its 33 staff (including 18 PhDs), extended its technology base, agreed its first collaboration with a leading pharmaceutical company, and brought forward the start of its first clinical trial by a year.

came to the market too soon, when its lead products were still far from ready for human trials. An industry rule of thumb suggests that an optimised drug in late-stage animal trials has only a one in a hundred chance of making it to market.

He complains: "The major analysts don't write on AIM, there's very little coverage and very little action. We are not anti- AIM but in our particular circumstances this year AIM has not helped."

PAUL DURMAN

Financial market data table with columns for company names, prices, and percentages. Includes sections for '1997/98 High/Low' and '1997/98 Low/High'.

Survey undertaken by NCP Market Research among 1,000 randomly selected bank customers. Interviews were conducted by telephone between 24 Nov 1997 and 17 Dec 1997. Figures must be aged 18 or over in order to participate. Details of the survey are available on request.

Advertisement for First Direct banking services. Features the slogan 'if you don't enjoy free banking... you're with the wrong bank' and lists account types like 'Annual current account charges' and 'Getting cash is easy'.

Advertisement for Iiyama flat screen LCD monitors. Features the headline 'Bright city flat available now for a bijou £999*' and includes an image of the monitor.

Time for the Government to save

Monetary policy should be boring. That is the view of the Bank of England's chief economist, Mervyn King. On Thursday, I expect the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to pass another milestone along this road by leaving interest rates unchanged, although it could always restore some excitement by fulfilling Anatole Kaletsky's prediction of an increase. Whether or not it is his ambition, the Chancellor seems to have succeeded in doing the equivalent with fiscal policy. The Budget due in two weeks' time is most unlikely to set the pulse racing. However, just as with monetary policy, it is virtue, not excitement, that we should demand from Chancellors.

On purely fiscal grounds, Gordon Brown can already lay claim to our approbation. The PSBR may not quite make a surplus this year, but it will be close. Next year, a surplus is definitely on the cards. Yet therein lies the problem. It has always been nonsense for the Government to suppress claims for increased public spending with the argument that "the money simply isn't there". Given that it can borrow, the Government can always choose to put the money there. The argument is even more ridiculous this year when money is pouring into the Treasury coffers and it can borrow in the markets at only 6 per cent, the lowest since the early 1960s. Yet even if the logic of the argument is awry, Mr Brown is right to be tight-fisted.

Britain is not alone in standing on the brink of a surplus on its public accounts. The same is true in Canada and the United States. There, however, a national debate has begun on what to do with the money. The broad choices are to cut taxes, increase government spending, or pay off debt. This debate now needs to start here. Unfortunately, the Government is so afraid of giving succour to its spending ministries and of offending its supporters that it feels unable to come clean. (Coincidentally, this helps its electoral prospects by disguising the existence of a few few rabbits that can be produced



out of the hat before the next election.) The debate will have to be forced upon it.

I wish to put in a plea for the option likely to be least popular with the voters. The Chancellor should not only resist calls for tax reductions and expenditure rises, but he should take the opportunity to raise taxes and enjoy an even larger surplus. The immediate case concerns the imbalance in the economy between still strong consumer spending and a manufacturing sector hit hard by the rampant pound. The more the Chancellor can do to restrain consumer demand by increasing taxes, the lower the rate of interest which the MPC will think necessary to achieve its inflation objective, and the lower the pound is likely to be.

As regards strategy, the Chancellor claims to be guided by the rule that the ratio of public debt to GDP should be held at a "stable and prudent level" over the economic cycle. But what is a prudent level? The 60 per cent laid down in the Maastricht treaty is too high. At times of severe crisis, it may be necessary for the deficit to rise substantially. The pre-existing level of public debt should be sufficiently low to allow this to happen without undue strain. On this score, the current level of debt (just over 50 per cent of GDP) is not prudent. Then there is the question of national saving. The

Government keeps wittering on about the importance of saving and is agonising over the details of the new regime to take the place of Tassas and Peps. Yet the evidence is overwhelmingly that attempts to boost the overall level of saving by such schemes are completely useless. All they do is to shuffle the same amount of saving into different forms. The biggest contribution the Government could make is to stop talking about saving and start doing it — by running a budget surplus.

As the surplus ate away at the accumulated public debt, it would reduce the amount that had to be spent each year on debt interest, currently running at some £25 billion a year, the equivalent of 13p of the standard rate of income tax. As the Government used its surplus to retire debt, people would effectively be accumulating a stake in a lower future tax burden, or better social benefits.

What if the private sector did not take the opportunity to soak up the funds no longer absorbed by the public deficit? That is where the MPC comes in. Under the current policy mix, because interest rates are the weapon for restraining demand, the exchange rate is sustained at a high level. The consequent balance of payments deficit that we will see this year represents national dis-saving — the accumulation of net claims on us by foreigners, which will partially offset the increase to our stock of wealth induced by real investment in the British economy. A policy of running a surplus on the public accounts would help to reduce the external deficit or even turn it into a surplus.

The Government never tires of telling us that it is determined to base policy on the long-term interest. There could be few better ways of putting fine words into action than by running a sustained budget surplus. That might not have the effect of making monetary policy interesting in the old sense, but it would at least give us a change. From worrying about raising rates, the MPC's concern would shift to when, and by how much, to reduce them.

World pacts in peril as US takes own line on telecoms

Bronwen Maddox on America's Gulf stance and its echo on the phone



President Clinton's other business has left a trade conflict on telephony to fester

Americans, we now know, prefer their President to make love not war. Bill Clinton has survived the twin threats of the past month — Monica Lewinsky and Saddam Hussein — suffering only a slight loss of international stature in the wake of the triumphant peace-making of Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General.

There have, however, been casualties — problems festering for lack of presidential attention. Among a slew of worsening trade conflicts, one stands out: the US decision unilaterally to rewrite the world's rules for international telephone calls. The dispute, although probably inevitable, given the revolution in world

communications, is of legal and symbolic importance for trading relations between the US and the rest of the world. It threatens to set the US on collision course with the World Trade Organisation. With echoes of US unease in accepting a UN-brokered Gulf settlement, it reveals US discontent

with accepting the authority of international bodies. The heart of the dispute is the rates that countries charge to deliver calls from other countries to their citizens. The need for some kind of international agreement has always been clear. Each country holds a monopoly on delivering calls

to its citizens; if free to set its own rates, each could be expected to set them well above costs. Overall, all countries would be worse off.

The traditional answer has been for pairs of countries to strike bilateral deals over the "termination rate" for receiving calls. The two almost always pick the same rate each way.

This has always been controversial. For a start, there is the problem of establishing what countries' costs are. Negotiations have also been cursed by asymmetries between countries, particularly rich and poor. Developing countries have much lower penetration of telephones and so tend to have higher costs. Rich nations tend to make more calls than poor nations, and end up paying much more than they receive. The UK annually pays out \$160 million more than it receives, according to industry estimates; the US pays out about \$5.6 billion more than it takes in, according to government figures.

However, the catalyst for the current dispute is the liberalisation of the industry in many developed countries, led by the BT privatisation in the UK. Countries that still have monopolies — particularly many developing countries — have been able to play off companies in competitive markets against each other to push down rates. By bringing down the cost of international calls, competition has also pushed up the volume of traffic originating from richer countries, worsening the imbalance.

As the same time, new "bypass" services take advantage of the fact that, in many countries, rates are still far above costs. "Call-back" services let a caller in a country with high phone charges to route a call through, say, the US. They operate within the traditional payment system, but boost the imbalance in traffic between two nations. New services such as the trading of leased lines between two countries take traffic out of the settlement system entirely.

In responding to these changes, UK and US regulators have taken radically different routes. In Britain, Ofcom and the Department of Trade and Industry have, for the most part, stuck to their principle of "light touch" regulation. They believe that provided all charges are openly declared,

benefits of competition probably outweigh the risk that foreign telephone companies will abuse their monopoly power. Australia, Germany and Japan, which also pay foreign countries far more than they get for placing calls, take a similar stance to the UK's.

In the US, however, the Federal Communications Commission has taken a highly controversial stance. The 1997 WTO telecoms agreement has already forced the FCC to stop barring foreign telephone companies from operating in the US unless their country lets US companies operate freely there.

However, the FCC still faces an international challenge on a second front — its decision to reset unilaterally the settlement rates that US companies such as AT&T, MCI and Sprint pay foreign ones, cutting them to "benchmark" levels that it judges are "closer to cost... where they would be if the market were fully competitive". It has made this ruling mandatory. It is also refusing to let foreign telecoms companies operate in the US until their home countries' rates fall to the stipulated levels.

US companies can scarcely believe their luck. They have won an almost unimaginably rich reward for their years of lobbying Washington — the insistence of their own regulator that they rewrite their contracts with their foreign counterparts in their own favour.

However, the FCC move has provoked from America's trading partners the increasingly familiar accusation that the US is guilty of "extraterritoriality" — seeking to determine the terms of trade outside its borders.

At least six legal challenges have been filed, with Britain's Cable & Wireless arguing that the FCC is exceeding its jurisdiction in setting "the rate that foreign common carriers must charge US common carriers for terminating their traffic in the foreign market". There is a tiny risk that failure to solve this dispute would cause telephone calls between the US and some smaller countries to be disrupted. There is a greater risk that the dispute will become embedded in legal contests, in a way that may harm the framework for international telecoms regulation. A dispute in which the US questioned its obligations under the WTO agreement is in no one's interests if it undermined the WTO's authority. There is no lack of examples of how unilateral acts by the US can insert a thorn into relations, with its closest trading partners. The extra-territorial reach of its sanctions against Cuba, Libya and Iran, in which the US seeks to punish foreign companies for doing businesses, has complicated relations with Europe.

Technicalities of paying for international telephone calls seem a world away from the Iraqi stand-off. However, the effect of Mr Annan's diplomatic triumph has been to strengthen the claim of the UN and other multilateral organisations that they still have a role. In contesting their jurisdiction, the US may find itself out of line with the spirit of the times.

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Noel gets his skates on

Telly Addies
BBC1, 7.00pm

Addies of *Telly Addies* will hardly recognise the show. The enormously pleased-with-himself Noel Edmonds is still asking the questions, a matter for rejoicing or not depending on taste, but otherwise the makeover is radical. Gone are those two extended families kolling on sofas. Instead we have three pairs of contestants, apparently unrelated, and they are either sitting upright on stools or dashing around the "high-tech" studio set. Noel dashes as well so if nothing else, the new *Telly Addies* is a lot healthier for all concerned. The questioning seems brisker and more demanding as well. If you can resist ten facts about *Starsky and Hutch* or *Miami Vice* in what seems like as many seconds you will be doing a lot better than the people here. The most bizarre challenge is guessing the identity of a celebrity hidden in what looks like a space-age fridge.

Local Heroes
BBC2, 8.00pm

Adam Hart-Davis dons his pink and yellow outfit, gets on his bike and goes in search of more pioneers of science. His latest series ventures further afield than before with programmes about the beginnings of science made in Egypt and Italy. But meanwhile he is on home territory, starting in Devon and Cornwall. As usual, Hart-Davis splices up his expositions with practical demonstrations, and there is a kit available for those wishing to try his experiments at home. His enthusiasm remains boundless. His "heroes" are a mixture of the well-known and the unknown. In the first category are Thomas Newcomen of steam engine fame and William Murdoch, who built the world's first mechanical vehicle. But Hart-Davis is usually good on obscure figures such as Henry Winstanley, builder of the Edystone lighthouse.

To the Ends of the Earth
Channel 4, 9.00pm

Snakes are all the rage in television documentary at the moment. Only last week we were taken to Australia to encounter the world's ten deadliest. Now it is off to South Africa to meet the black mamba and if it does not make the top ten it cannot



To the lighthouse (BBC2, 8.00pm)

be far behind. One bite, we discover, is enough to kill 12 men. So why should Mark O'Shea, a British peripatetic, be so keen to catch it? The answer is partly personal (it is the one snake he has not caught in the wild) and partly medical (the venom can be used to treat snake bite victims). Demonstrating that he is fearless by disturbing and snaring a crocodile in a lake, O'Shea joins forces with another snake man to go gamba hunting. The quest is not without its mishaps. O'Shea gets badly bitten and faces a hospital stay. But he does not give up easily.

The Net
BBC2, 11.15pm

The lively guide to all things digital returns for a new series with a mix of items calculated to grab the attention of even the most confirmed technophobe. For starters, we meet Lara Croft, billed as the hottest star to come out of computer games. The virtual reality woman with the magnificent breasts has become not only a fantasy figure for men but a hit with her own sex as well. There are rumours of a Hollywood film starring Elizabeth Hurley. Meanwhile Lara materialises from cyberspace to talk to *The Net*. On a darker note we hear from the United States how the Internet is attracting stalkers. After an advertisement in her name appeared on the net, one woman received thousands of e-mails from men looking for prostitutes. Peter Waymark

Postscript Choice: Grenfell
Radio 3, 9.15pm

Maureen Lipman has been brilliant as the embodiment of Joyce Grenfell on stage, and this also involves the creative team from the *Re-Joyce* stage show. Grenfell is sometimes portrayed as having been a talented but lightweight entertainer whereas in fact she was talented and multi-faceted, capable of great dramatic work and real depth as well as highly entertainingly English comedy for which she is best remembered. The work from her repertoire on offer this week has been chosen to reflect the breadth of her talent and includes, in tonight's show, the sketch *Counterside* in which Grenfell (years ahead of her time) sends up the bogus psychology of retail selling.

RADIO 1

6.30am Chris Moyles 9.00am Simon Mayo 12.00 Jo Whiteley
12.00pm News 1.00pm Radio 1 News 2.00pm Mark Radcliffe 4.00pm
Dove 6.00pm News 6.30pm Steve Lamacq 7.00pm The
Evening Session 8.30pm Trade Update with Clara McDonnell 8.40pm
Andy Kershaw 10.30pm Mary Anne Hobbes 1.00am Charlie
Jordan 4.00am Clive Warren

RADIO 2

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30am Wogan 9.30am Ken Bruce 11.30am
Arne Robinson 1.30pm Debbie Trovler 2.00pm Ed Stewart 3.00pm
John Dunn 7.00pm Humphrey Lyttelton 8.00pm Malcolm Laycock
10.00pm News 11.00pm News 12.00pm News 12.30pm Richard
Alison 12.05am Steve Macdon 3.00am Alex Lester

RADIO 5 LIVE

6.00am The Breakfast Programme 9.00am Nicky Campbell 12.00pm
Midday News 1.00pm News 2.00pm News 3.00pm News 4.00pm
Jill Johnson 7.00pm News 8.00pm News 9.00pm News 10.00pm
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COMPANIES 43 Revamp crucial as BTR banks on disposals

BUSINESS

POLICY 46 Government must save, says Roger Boothe

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

MONDAY MARCH 2 1998

MPC likely to be divided over raising interest rates

By JANET BUSH ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee is again likely to be split on the need for higher interest rates at this week's crucial meeting ahead of the Budget on March 17.

The *Inflation Report*, which has to reflect the full range of views on the committee, on balance concluded that another rate rise would probably be needed if the Government were to hit its inflation target.

meeting and the subsequent one in February, when rates were held. Economic data since the February meeting suggest that the domestic economy remains robust but that the manufacturing sector, and particularly exports, is struggling in the face of lower demand from Asia and the strength of the pound.

attributed the fall to increasing pressures to contain costs because of the strength of the pound. However, the latest *Enterprise Barometer*, also published today, shows that well over half the businesses that it surveyed now face a shortage of skilled employees and that, for 22 per cent, this is the biggest single business problem.

looking to increase pay, we should expect further increases in UK wage settlements. In January Mr George, together with the three other Bank insiders on the committee, and DeAnne Julius, former chief economist of British Airways, voted against a rate rise. Voting for a rise were three academic economists brought into the MPC from outside the Bank.

The position of Mervyn King, the Bank's Deputy Governor-elect and chief economist, is pivotal. In testimony to the Treasury Committee last week, he said the arguments for holding rates and raising them were equally compelling.

Shell Capital to challenge GE and Ford

By CARL MORTSHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

SHELL, the multinational oil company, is developing a financial services business. The new venture, which will be called Shell Capital, will seek to marry the group's project finance, risk and asset management skills with the financial strength and business links of the world's largest private oil company.

motor industry were made possible by the securitisation of the huge income streams from selling cars to consumers. Shell reckons it, too, can add value by offering bundled products to its customers. Within the upstream oil exploration business, it is likely to use its funding capability to lead to exploration partners, converting the revenue from oil sales into a loan. In chemicals, Shell sees a demand for hedging products from its customers who want to remove the price risk in buying commodity chemicals.

pany has been approached by several investment banks with proposals to market unit trusts and other consumer financial products. Shell already has credit cards in the US and Australia, and Mr Wilder said any move into consumer financial services would probably be "off the credit card platform". The oil company is still far from reaching a decision but Mr Wilder said that it was not inconceivable that at some stage the Shell brand could be used to market motor or travel insurance, most likely with a partner in the relevant industry. He said: "It would be based on the security of the Shell brand, the name recognition around the theme of transport."

Sword hangs over SB/Glaxo pair

By MARTIN BARROW



Sykes: might be forced to stand down

A GROWING number of institutional investors in Glaxo Wellcome and Smith-Kline Beecham believe either Jan Leschly or Sir Richard Sykes may have to be forced to stand down in order to resurrect the proposed merger of the two UK pharmaceutical groups.



Leschly: due to start briefing institutions

Pay anger for United Utilities

United Utilities is at the centre of a storm over excessive pay after it emerged that Derek Lewis — who runs Vortex, the company's facilities management subsidiary — was paid £3 million last year. He is not a full-time employee, but has secured a £188,000 fee paid annually to Vortex, his private company, which also receives a performance-based bonus on his behalf.

Kingfisher, the retail group, has denied it plans to sell the Woolworths and Superdrug chains to fund the expansion of its electrical and DIY stores, which include Comet and B&Q. A spokesman said yesterday: "Both Woolworths and Superdrug are very much part of Kingfisher's future."

Texas offer Texas Utilities, the American company, is expected to launch an agreed £4.2 billion takeover bid for The Energy Group, trumping a £4 billion offer by PacificCorp and valuing the UK electricity company at around 800p a share, against Friday's closing price of 778p.

Halifax bonus Investors in the Halifax who received free shares after its flotation last year could learn of an extra windfall bonus this week. The bank has £3.5 billion of spare cash in its coffers and could return some of this to investors via a special dividend or a buyback.

Aitken job Jonathan Aitken, the former Conservative Defence Minister, who lost a controversial libel action last year, has become an adviser to GEC, the UK defence and engineering company.

CROSSWORD puzzle grid with clues for 'TIMES TWO' and 'CROSSWORD'.

- ACROSS: 1 Old Labourite (9), 6 Part of circumference (3), 8 Spill; emotionally hurt (5), 9 Tendency to resist motion (7), 10 (Watchman) make rounds (6), 12 A bedtime drink (5), 13 Foul smell (6), 14 Deviously achieve, obtain (6), 17 Leisurely walk (5), 19 Milne's gloomy donkey (6), 21 Idle chatter (7), 22 Greek (4), 23 Teachers' union (abbr); one with bolt (3), 24 Turned up (nose) (9).

SOLUTION TO NO 1341 ACROSS: 1 Charge 5 Change 8 Spit 9 Traverse 10 Brooke 12 Diet 15 Poetic justice 16 Mere 17 Castle 19 Occasion 21 Blew 22 Volley 23 Tights

THE CROSSWORD TIMES BOOKSHOP CROSSWORD ENTHUSIASTS - SPECIAL OFFER: The Times Sunday Crossword Book 3 is available to Times readers for just £4 (RRP £4.99) while supplies last from The Times Bookshop.

Khoo's Standard stake put at £2bn

By RICHARD MILES

TAN SRI KHOO TECK PUAT, the elderly Singaporean who owns 15 per cent of Standard Chartered Bank, would demand about £2 billion for his stake if he were to sell. Reports over the weekend suggested that Mr Khoo's shares were offered two weeks ago to Barclays, whose chief executive, Martin Taylor, is known to have sounded out Standard Chartered about the possibility of a merger.

South-East Asian markets. If he decides to sell, Mr Khoo will demand a large premium for the largest single stake in Standard Chartered. The bank is currently capitalised at about £3.5 billion on paper, but it is understood that Mr Khoo will want a 30 to 40 per cent premium on any deal. A spokesman for Standard Chartered said yesterday that as far as the bank was concerned, Mr Khoo remained a "supportive and committed shareholder". Barclays was unavailable for comment.

Pirc sees one-stop shop for UK plc

By ALASDAIR MURRAY, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

PENSION: Investment Research Consultants, the leading corporate governance group, will this week step up its campaign to force an overhaul of company law by calling for institutional investors to declare publicly their voting record and the creation of a single agency to monitor corporate governance issues. Pirc will tell Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, at its annual meeting on Wednesday that UK plc needs a one-stop shop for company regulation to ensure improved clarity and efficiency "in the interests of competitiveness".

has no right to even know how the votes attached to their money are being used by the managers of their money, Ms Simpson said. Mrs Beckett is to make the keynote speech at the conference and is expected to outline in more detail her plans for a review of company law in the wake of the Hampel report, which was published at the end of January. The Government is believed to be keen to find new ways of encouraging institutional investors to take a more active role in corporate governance issues, although it is likely to stop short of calling for compulsory voting.

Abbey considers City Deal sale

By RICHARD MILES, BANKING CORRESPONDENT



Harley: new chief executive

ABBNEY NATIONAL may sell City Deal, the telephone and postal stockbroking business it acquired just eight months ago, for as little as a few million pounds. City Deal has been closed to new business since October, after a series of customer complaints about its administration processes. The Securities and Futures Authority is monitoring the situation. Overall control of City Deal has effectively passed to Gareth Jones, the Abbey National

director in charge of treasury operations and a man once tipped to succeed Peter Birch, the chief executive who retired this weekend and was replaced by Ian Harley. However, insiders say that even if Mr Jones succeeds in getting City Deal back on line, he may put the broking business up for sale because it sits uncomfortably with Abbey National's other treasury and retail financial services. A further complication is Abbey National's long-standing

relationship with Charles Schwab's ShareLink, which competes directly against City Deal. Abbey has contracted out share deals done through the bank to ShareLink. Abbey National acquired City Deal when it bought Cater Allen, the City discount house with a considerable offshore trust business in Jersey, for £191 million last June. The bank wrote off £29 million in goodwill, mainly as a result of the deal, according to figures published last week.

NEW CORBY advertisement featuring a large circular logo and text describing the new town development, including contact information for Corby Industrial Development Centre.

Large vertical advertisement on the right edge of the page, partially obscured, featuring the text 'Harrod arrested safe de' and a portrait of a woman.